W[illegible]MÜNZENBERG HEINRICH MANN

The New German People's Front Goes Into Action

NEW MASSES

MAY 4, 1937 FIFTEEN CENTS A COPY

The Yanks Under Fire

America's Lincoln Battalion at the Spanish Front

By JAMES HAWTHORNE

America Sits Down

Four Articles by

SOLOMON DIAMOND
JOSEPH NORTH
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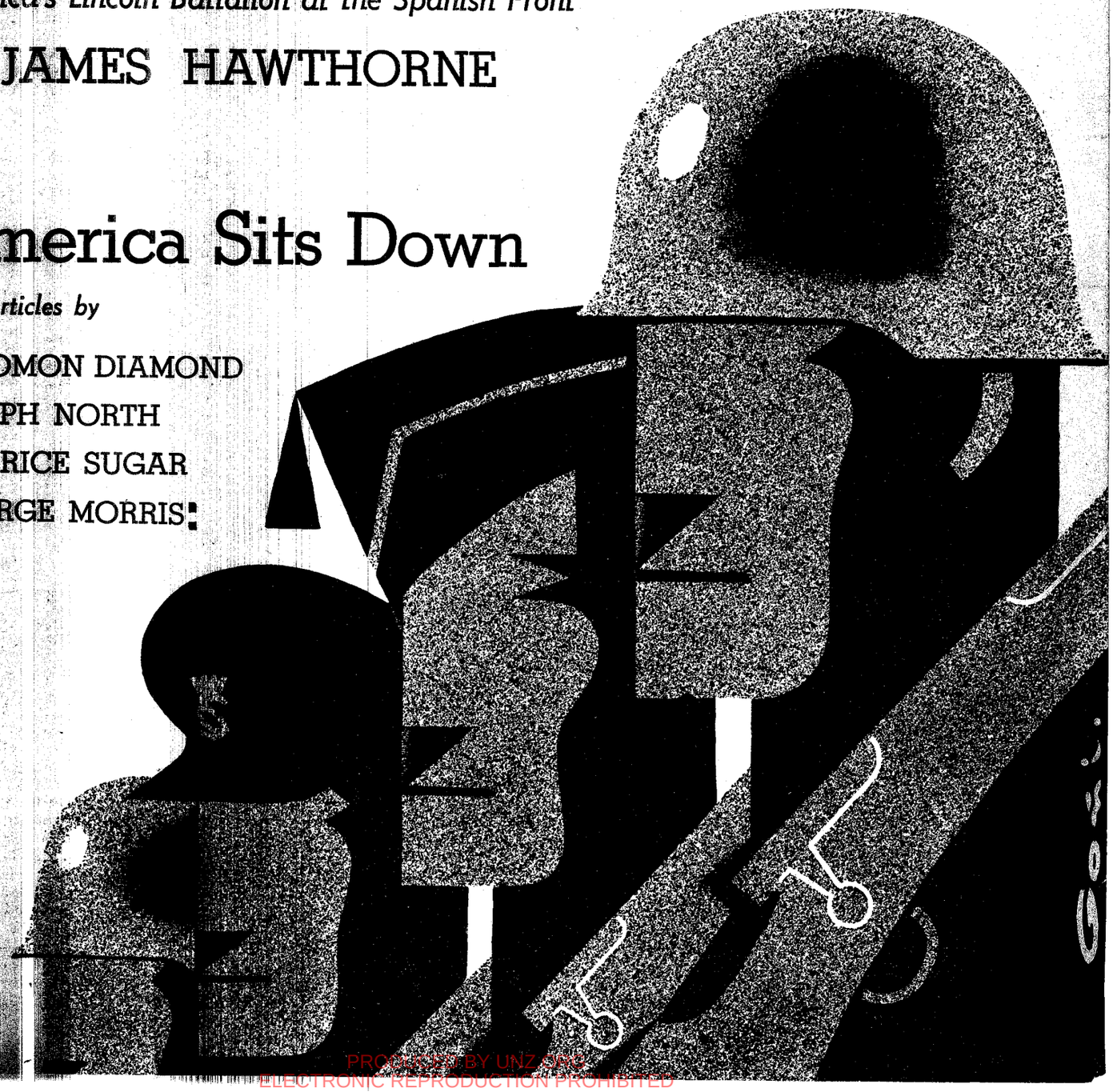
GEORGE MORRIS



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BETWEEN OURSELVES

MR. TROTSKY'S fairy tale about Moscow gold and the NEW MASSES being "the unofficial organ of Ogpu" has had, like many fairy tales, a certain value. Apart from its value in placing Mr. Trotsky in a little clearer light for some of those who up to this time had regarded him as a fountain-head of truth and wisdom, his nonsense also served to make a public question of the financial resources of this magazine. Heywood Broun's question "Who Owns the *Nation?*" has had an echo from our own Robert Forsythe, who speaks his mind on page 26.

Meanwhile, our public drive for a $15,000 fund—announced in the Readers' Forum last week—has already borne considerable fruit. We have heard numerous comments lately concerning the improved quality of the NEW MASSES, comment that to some extent at least was owing to our increased coverage in the enlarged issue two weeks ago—and this week we publish another extra-size issue to do justice to the great issues of the day. We feel that the improvement, which is closely geared to the availability of hard cash, is something our readers are directly concerned with. We want to continue this improvement unhampered until the circulation increase which is bound to result reaches the point where the extra expense involved is offset by increased circulation and advertising revenue.

Responses have already been coming in at a very encouraging pace, so that we are able to report that at press time, receipts have reached $2420.19. As

we remarked last week, we are not here asking you for funds directly, but are urging you to spread the news of the drive and help organize it. Many individuals and organizations have arranged parties for the benefit of the NEW MASSES, to be held during the month of May. "Socialist competition" is already rife among the branches of the International Workers' Order in this connection, and arrangements have been made for the editors of the magazine to attend their meetings to explain plans for improving the magazine. Another thing we would like you to publicize is the fact that we are offering lifetime subscriptions to the NEW MASSES for $100, and ten-year subscriptions for $25. Apropos of this, we would like to quote a letter we received:

"Answering yours of April 15, announcing a drive to get funds for NEW MASSES' urgent needs, we enclose $25.

"But instead of sending us a subscription lasting ten years, we hope that you will be willing instead to send the same number of copies—520 in all—in the form of an eight-week subscription *now*, to each of the sixty-five addresses on the enclosed list.

"And could you begin with the excellent April 20 issue so they'll have the information about the Hershey strike, Soviet Arctic, Spanish situation, Schappes's reply to Holmes, etc.?

"So far as we know, these sixty-five are people who ought to be reading the NEW MASSES but probably aren't."

Perhaps this gives you an idea. In any case, please remember that if the NEW MASSES is to continue to improve, you must share in the responsibility for improving it as well as in the fruits of its improvement. Watch this column weekly for news of the campaign, and write our business department for information on how you can participate.

Who's Who

WILLI MÜNZENBERG is now in Paris where he is an active member of the new German People's Front as a representative of the Communist Party of Germany. He was formerly educational director of the Young Communist League of Germany. His talents in this respect were attested to by the Hitler government when he was in the United States two or three years ago. At that time the Nazis urged our State Department to bar him from the country on the ground that he was "one of the most brilliant Marxist propagandists alive today." . . . Heinrich Mann is president of the new German people's front recently consolidated in Paris, and is an internationally known novelist, author of *In the Land of Cockaigne, The Man of Power,* and other works. He is the brother of Thomas Mann, who recently visited America. . . . James Hawthorne is the NEW MASSES correspondent in Valencia. Joseph North was formerly the editor of the NEW MASSES, and is now the editor of the *Sunday Worker.* . . . Solomon Diamond is a doctor of philosophy who has devoted himself in recent years to researches in social and political psychology. He is a member of the Psychologists' Forum. . . . Maurice Sugar has been active as a labor lawyer in Detroit for many years, and recently polled an exceptionally large vote as a labor-party candidate in that city. . . . Robert M. Coates, who is perhaps best known for his widely read book, *The Outlaw Years,* was formerly book reviewer for the *New Yorker. He is now working on a long* novel of American life. . . . Philip Carter is an instructor in philosophy in one of New York City's universities. . . . D. J. Struik, a member of the faculty of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has contributed to *Science & Society.* . . . Philip Rahv, formerly an editor of *Partisan Review & Anvil* and a frequent contributor to the NEW MASSES, is working with William Phillips on a study of American literature to be published in Horace Gregory's forthcoming anthology, *New Letters in America.* . . . Muriel Rukeyser's new volume of poems, *U. S. 1,* will be published soon by Covici, Friede. . . . The print by Chet La More reproduced on page 9 is one of a series of eight issued by the A.C.A. Print Group. The originals, on view at the A.C.A. Gallery in New York City, sell for one dollar, proceeds going to aid the Spanish loyalists.

NOTE: We have just received a remarkable article from T. A. Jackson on George VI's coronation. Read it next week.

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Flashbacks

"IN the name of the State of Illinois, I command this meeting immediately and peaceably to disperse," shouted a police captain to a meeting in Haymarket Square, May 4, 1886. "We are peaceable," protested labor leader Fielden, at the same time relinquishing his place on the speakers' stand. At this instant, a bomb, hurled by an unknown person, exploded, and police, who had just arrived in large numbers, opened fire. Thus began the Haymarket Affair. . . . Well aware of the significance of May 1, Coxey's ragged army of unemployed chose that day on which to end their historic march to Washington in 1894. There

the army found all avenues of approach to Congress closed off by police. But Coxey, bearing his petition, tried to slip in via the shrubbery. He was discovered, however, and charged with "stepping upon certain plants, shrubs, and turf . . . against the form of the statute in such case made and provided." For this crime, and for carrying a banner (size two by three inches and pinned to his lapel), the unemployed leader was sentenced to twenty days in jail and fined five dollars. . . . Karl Marx was born May 5, 1818, at Trèves (Trier), Germany.

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NEW MASSES

MAY 4, 1937

The above postcard is one of many recently circulated in Germany through the official mails. This one, picturing the corpulent Nazi leaders, is captioned: "These folk comrades don't suffer from shortage of fat."

THE PEOPLE'S FRONT IN GERMANY

From Passivity to Action

The defiance of Hitlerism by the German people spurred on the formation of the now functioning people's front

By Willi Münzenberg

ALL reports from Germany confirm the estimate of the London *Times* that in the course of the fourth winter the difficulties of the Hitler regime have increased tremendously while the strength of the opposition has grown proportionately. In 1932 Hitler made his bid for power with the slogan, "Give me four years' time." The four years have passed, and the net result of the economic autarchy of National Socialism has been a squandering of the nation's wealth, piling up of a staggering national debt, plundering of the nation's resources, and a shortage of all essential raw materials—iron in particular—as well as a shortage of primary food supplies. The Hitler regime has thrived during these years on the propaganda value of certain successes in foreign policy: incorporation of the Saar to the Reich, reëstablishment of compulsory military service, the building of a new army, the march into the Rhineland. But as time goes on, it becomes more and more difficult for the Nazi government to disguise the serious domestic situation with the deceptive propaganda of ever fresh successes in foreign policy. For the Hitler policies have not improved Germany's internal difficulties and have only forced Germany into a position of voluntary isolation. Never were the ties between England and France, nor the feelings against Germany in the United States, stronger than today. The French Front Populaire, unfriendly to Hitler, holds its ground in France. And in Finland the orientation to the left from within has led to a closer understanding with the Soviet Union from without. In the armaments race which Hitler initiated, Britain's military strength (as well as that of the Soviet Union's army of peace) keeps mounting at a rate which far outstrips the pace at which Germany, lacking raw materials, is able to rearm.

The severe defeat of the Hitler agent Degrelle in Belgium in the elections on April 11 is a defeat for the Hitler regime. A second and even severer blow for the Nazi government was that delivered in Spain, where the strategic plans of the German generals, their technical equipment—airplanes, tanks, etc.—and, of paramount significance, their fighting forces in men, went down to defeat. Evidence was given that when hirelings sent by the fascists are pitted against republicans, Communists, and Socialists, against workers and farmers imbued with an unwavering devotion to ideals of freedom, the fascist columns fall to pieces, hundreds of men surrender themselves as prisoners, and other hundreds go over to fight for the democratic side. Of course, the Hitler system still has immense resources on which it can draw, material resources as well as those imponderables which still hold its regime of force together. The April visit by economic minister Hjalmar Schacht to Brussels and Schacht's projected visit to Paris early in May are intended to assist in loosening up the rigid economic autarchy and open up the way to negotiations with France, England, and America, with a

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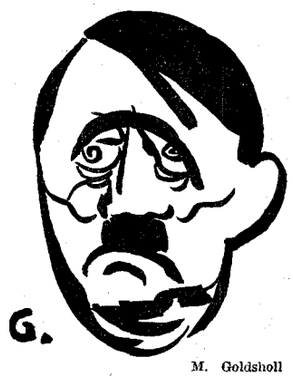
view to obtaining, from these countries, loans, colonies, and assistance generally, for which the Hitler regime will be willing to negotiate the matter of reëntering the League of Nations and the question of armaments. That this is only a maneuver by which to obtain foreign raw materials and financial assistance need hardly be pointed out. But the Hitler government further hopes thereby to cause confusion among its foreign rivals and thus procure for itself another breathing-space and momentary relief.

At home, the Hitler system still has a certain hold, ideologically, upon the youth, the bourgeoisie, its own party members, and sections of the well-paid armaments and munitions workers. But what, after four years, stands out as characteristic of the Hitler regime, is the incessant narrowing down of its mass base and an accompanying increase in the police terror which strikes at ever broader segments of the population, including even such non-political groups, for example, as the Bible Research Society. The Social Democratic Party of Germany, in its green leaflets for February, summarizes the situation as follows:

> The tone of the German situation in recent weeks has been one of deep and wide-spread discontent. In the opinion of a Berlin press correspondent, the symptoms are not those of immediate grievances, such as give rise to a momentary dissatisfaction which is quickly dissipated, but rather of a general disgruntlement with existing conditions.

Cumulative internal difficulties, failures in foreign policy in recent months, brutal oppression, corruption in the ranks of National Socialism which, as has become known, spreads to the very top of the Nazi party, give impetus to the growth of the opposition even among sections of the German population who might otherwise not be ill-disposed toward the Hitler regime. The opposition movement draws nourishment from the most diversified currents which flow into it: elements from among the unemployed on relief, and from among the industrialists; from worker to general; from buck private to crown prince (whose palace is under surveillance by the Gestapo), from illegal Communist to erstwhile German Nationalist, to Jew, Catholic, Protestant, Bible Researcher, and, finally, to the mass of disappointed followers, one-time Hitler voters and Storm Troopers.

Indicative of opposition ferment among the working classes is the occurrence in recent months of hundreds of strikes and other actions (of a local character, it is true) which have broken out in the factories. That the Hitler regime takes the opposition drive in earnest is evident in the fact that the Gestapo in Halle sent a confidential memorandum to employers requiring them to report every two weeks on the mood of their employees; and even more revealingly in the well-known fact that the Hitler government was obliged once more to postpone the elections for the *Vertrauensräte* which were scheduled for early in March. The regime is trying to split the working class by organizing *Werkscharen* (factory crews), technical emergency relief



M. Goldsholl

squads by means of which it hopes to maintain a reliable rear-guard in the industrial plants. The drift to the opposition is strongest among the small bourgeoisie and the middle classes, which with their voting strength carried Hitler into power. Tax and economic policies generally, which favor big industry and big business, show no consideration whatsoever for the small business man. Hitler's government has disbanded the artisans' guilds, and even pro-Nazi middle-class organizations, because effective opposition groups tended to form within them. The agricultural price policy has driven whole masses of peasants in many parts of the country toward the opposition; notably in the Pfalz, Baden, the Rhone, Thuringia, and in the north. In some places, in fact, market days were the occasion for near-riots. In industry it is, in the main, factories which work for the export market or use imported raw materials for their manufactures, and are hardest hit by the policy of autarchy, which today stand opposed to the Hitler regime. Recent weeks forced the church question to the fore with a new poignancy. On behalf of its followers, the Evangelical (Protestant) Church openly declared war on the Nazi state, and has even begun to distribute illegal handbills. The renewed attacks on the Catholic Church, including the demand that crucifixes be removed from schools and churches and Hitler's image be put in their place, as well as the Pope's recent Encyclical, have led to fresh assaults upon the Catholic population.

The serious predicament of the Hitler regime has brought on sharper struggle between groups both within the camp of the industrialists and that of Hitler's own followers. The whole world knows of the antagonism of big industry, the junkerdom, and the military to Hitler's foreign policy and to his meddling in Spain. The most important thing about the opposition at this stage is this: it keeps spreading horizontally, but has not yet concentrated and risen vertically. The forms and methods of the opposition struggle are taking their shape as the situation develops and in response to police persecution are growing from simple expressions of dissatisfaction into strikes and, for the first time, public demonstrations. The propaganda method most commonly used against Hitler today takes the form of passing information on *sotto voce*—a whispering campaign.

The Ministry of Justice was obliged, as a result, to adopt special precautions against a campaign that boded so much ill for the Hitler system. The Gestapo and the big shots of the Storm Troopers introduced courses of instruction for their agents to train them in special methods for combating the campaign. But the propaganda methods of the opposition are marvelously varied. There is, for example, the political anecdote, listening-in on foreign broadcasts (*streng verboten!*), boycott of Nazi meetings and affairs, non-observance of the Hitler salute, parodies of Nazi songs, speeches by opposition spokesmen in the factories and at meetings of the Labor Front and other "co-ordinated" organizations, hand-to-hand distribution of leaflets and books, illegal meetings on behalf of political prisoners and for aid to loyalist Spain, broadcasting from hidden radio stations abroad, and even at home, such as the recent German Communist Party station, never located, which for a time regularly went on the air at 9 o'clock each evening and continued for precisely one hour, an inspiration to thousands who could then pass along the information received to others.

The most vigorous resistance was that which was aroused in the Catholic districts where attempts were made to replace the crucifix with the image of Hitler. All such attempts were marked by actions of the Catholic population, which, as the fight went on, grew into struggles for freedom of speech and assembly. In Kloppenberg, a town in Oldenburg, the cross was ordered removed from Catholic schools and hospitals. The Catholic population was incensed. All Catholics at once withdrew from the Nazi Party and its affiliates, the mayor resigned, delegations left for Oldenburg to lodge protests so that by November 24, 1936, no less than two hundred persons had forced a hearing. For November 25 a Nazi meeting was announced at which matters would be explained to everybody's satisfaction. Seven thousand persons packed the hall and thousands more could not get in. The speaker was repeatedly interrupted, the crowd grew more and more menacing, and the government's spokesman finally declared the order null and void. The large hall echoed with shouts of joy. Nobody paid any more attention to the speaker, and the crowd streamed back into the streets elated with the victory it had scored.

In Frankenholz, in the Saar, according to the April 1 issue of the *Christlicher Gewerkschafter* (*Christian Trade Unionist*), a miners' sympathy strike was brought on by a similar instance. In Frankenholz, almost exclusively a miners' town, the government was compelled to put the cross back in its place and to release those arrested. In Konnersreuth, Bavaria, one hundred Catholic men and women marched in a body to the place where the confiscated cross was hidden and demanded it back. The authorities mobilized gendarmes, police, and police dogs. "Get ready to fire!" was the order given by the officers as police reserves rushed to the scene by cars and motorcycles. Next day a police attendant unostentatiously took the crucifix and set it back where it had been. Instances, these, showing

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that via the religious struggle have come public demonstrations, which in some cases have even succeeded in dominating meetings officially arranged by the Nazis.

Significant of how much of the population now feels the spirit of opposition to Hitler is the spontaneous applause which broke out at the performances of Schiller's *Don Carlos* in the Deutsches Theater in Berlin. At the words, "Sire, grant us the freedom to think," the audience burst into storms of applause which died down regretfully. Against these demonstrations, the Nazi organs, in particular *Wille und Macht* (*Will and Might*), the Hitler Youth paper, fulminated in lengthy articles.

A burning urge for security, freedom, and democracy today lives in the heart not only of worker and peasant, but of broad segments of the German bourgeoisie. The opposition, of course, is split into over sixty different parties, organizations, and splinter groups, but very recently a process of crystallization, a process of consolidation has been setting in.

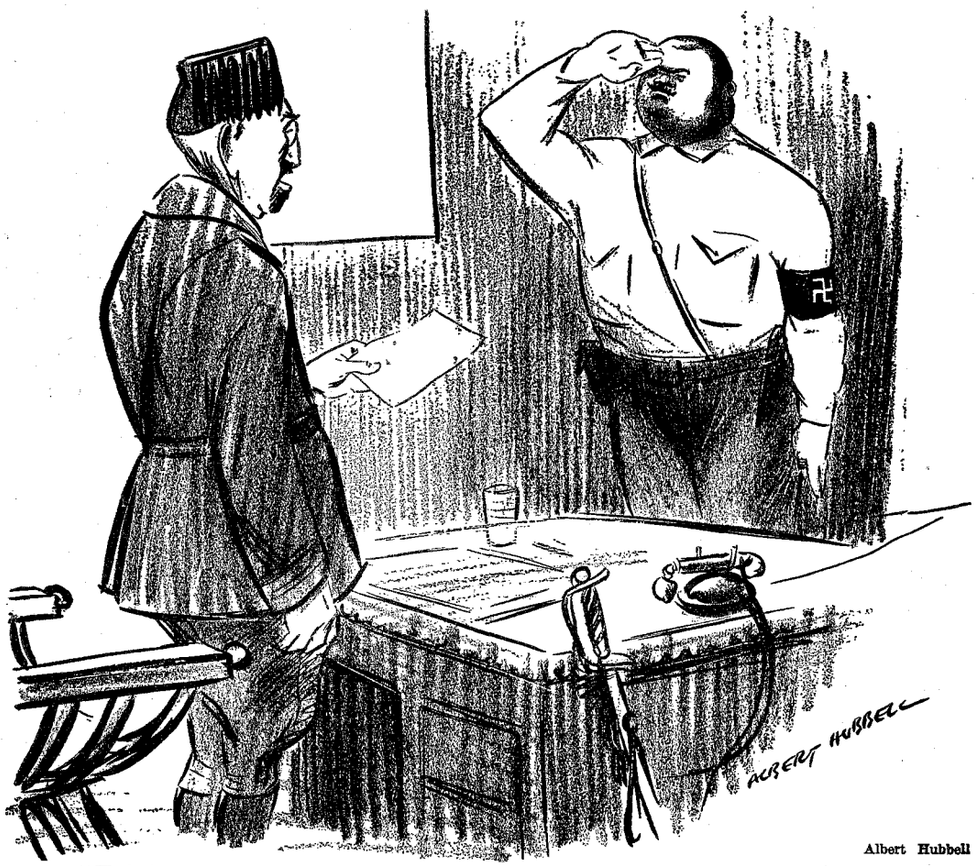
The initiative started over a year ago by a group of German Communists, Socialists, and middle-class spokesmen, which on February 2, 1936 culminated in a joint conference in Paris and in the creation of a Committee to Prepare a German People's Front, has, particularly during these last few months, made itself known outside Germany, and, which is more to the point, inside Germany as well. In a number of places, Socialists and Communists have joined hands for common action. Of special significance is the fact that not so long ago a delegation of Social Democratic Party members came from Germany to Prague in order to submit to the Socialist Party's Executive in session there, plans for a people's-front program and on behalf of the illegal Social Democratic Party of Germany, to demand their adherence to and support of the United German People's Front. The Executive at this writing is still holding off, but among members and functionaries of the Social Democratic Party abroad and right at home in Germany as well, sentiment for the United German People's Front is rapidly spreading. This is apparent, too, from the conference of the committee to prepare a German Popular Front which, meeting in Paris April 10-11 of this year, included over eighty Communists, Socialists, and middle-class anti-fascists. As a result of the conference, the committee not only gained added strength, but was able clearly and definitely to determine what the next steps of these united Hitler opponents should be. A note of deepest significance was struck by the appearance at the meeting of a visiting delegation from the Spanish People's Front, headed by the well-known president of the Cortes, Diego Martinez Barrio, who in a few deeply felt words told how in Spain today German anti-fascists are fighting side by side with Spanish anti-fascists, for the defeat of Spanish, German, and Italian fascism; and how in the blood shed by the fallen German, French, and other volunteers, a firm, growing international people's front is being nourished, and how Spain's *Frente Popular,* in consideration of the assistance which German volunteers are rendering to the Loyalists in Spain's civil war, will regard itself as honor-bound to lend its aid to the people's front of Germany in its struggle to overthrow the Hitler government. From now on, difficulties besetting Hitler's regime at home and abroad, the spread of the opposition and its cumulating strength, already demonstrated in open acts of resistance, cannot but favor the growth of the United German People's Front even more than have the past four years of the Hitler regime.

As a specific and important task, the conference set before itself a united struggle against the Hitler regime at home and abroad, a struggle to unseat the Hitler government, united assistance for victims of that regime in Germany and out, united vigilance and struggle against Hitler stool-pigeons and Hitler agents, mutual aid in the matters of publishing and distributing illegal literature and joint exploitation of all possibilities to broadcast in Germany; a struggle for equitable wages for German workers, for relief of the distressed German peasants and middle classes, for the freedom of German art and science, and for a state of affairs in Germany which will make possible for the German people a self-determination of its system and government by means of a free and fair election.

In foreign affairs, the principles espoused were termination of the Hitler policy of military and imperialistic attack and constant threat of war, return to the League of Nations, with a view to making the League an effective weapon in defense of peace, friendly alliances with all democratic and popular front governments—with France, Scandinavia, Czechoslovakia—and a binding defensive alliance with the Soviet Union as the world's main guarantor of peace.

The feeling which today in Germany, after four years of Hitler rule, is uppermost in the hearts and minds of the initiators of the German people's front and of millions like them was put into words in its most expressive form by our greatest living German writer, Thomas Mann, whose support of the German People's Front Committee has to an extraordinary degree enriched and strengthened it, when on April 10 in a message to the committee he wrote:

> In spirit I shall take a lively part in the proceedings of the conference which the People's Front will hold on April 10, and I wish from the bottom of my heart that your discussions may assist in clarifying the problems which so deeply affect us. It will by all means be necessary to provide a platform such as will make it possible for all Germans of good will, outside Germany and within, who long to see a government which is truly deserving of the name German, to collaborate.
>
> It is important to reinstate in their rights the now disowned and reviled concepts of freedom and humanity, for only they can uphold a new and better German state, and only through them can we come closer to the heart's longing which now moves the people of Germany. I regard myself as one with the German people's front in this conviction and in the conviction that there must be a freedom which can stand up for itself and a humanity that knows weakness in the face of its destroyers.



Albert Hubbell

"Tell Mr. Krupp, General Franco hates to complain, but sawdust-filled shells just won't explode."

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THE PEOPLE'S FRONT IN GERMANY

"The Alternative Is Death"

A famous novelist says history has convinced his fellow-Germans that they must take power

By Heinrich Mann

OF all national groups, the Germans have encountered the greatest difficulty in developing their own people's front. In the first place, the Nazi regime has concentrated all of its immense power to prevent the Germans from forming such a front. The heroic Spaniards were able to take up arms in defense of their Frente Popular. In Germany, terror cracks down on the people's front when it is barely in embryo.

In addition to this difficulty, the Germans have been faced with many obstacles which have hindered decisive steps toward forming their own popular front. For various reasons, more or less insignificant in themselves, if not in their effect, the German people have never been united. Thus they have not only recently, but at all times offered every advantage to a despotic minority. Under the Hohenzollern empire, Germany was always ruled by a minority government. Yet the same junkers and industrialists who then acted as the ruling class appeared again under the Weimar republic. They adapted themselves to democracy in their own fashion, and ruled as before.

The German people have not as yet developed a sense for power—except for this ruling class, which has developed it far too strongly. When the German people had the Weimar republic, which should have been a people's state, they administered it very honorably, but never defended it. The Germans have to learn above everything else that power must be conquered and defended. Only the ruling class has been able to realize this in the past. Recently, certain adventurers have learned from them. Under the new fraudulent name of "National Socialism," these adventurers consistently rule against the people. They reign in the manner of the old master class, but they are more oppressive and ruthless than their instructors.

The German people began to understand and solve these questions very slowly, and then only recently; many of them do not grasp them even today. The middle class in Germany is large, but ineffective. It does not know its own mind, but at last it is beginning to hate its Nazi enemies and to understand that it will be destroyed if this regime lasts much longer. In spite of this fear, it nevertheless detests, or at least distrusts, the workers. The narrow-minded middle class and its "intellectuals" have alone been deceived by the "anti-Bolshevist" slogans. It fears that the socialist workers will confiscate its shops.

It is of the utmost necessity to teach the middle class that no people's-front government will nationalize its shops, laboratories, and offices. The French Front Populaire governs, one must concede, without nationalization. The German Volksfront would adhere just as strictly to its obligations. The Communists, too, have promised that the people's front in Germany would introduce not communism, but democracy. A people that had lost its basic rights and all its liberties must first regain them. The question of social reform can arise only much later. Such reforms will not be introduced by force, but by voluntary decisions. Universal suffrage will be respected. It is quite another question whether socialism can be reached through free and universal suffrage. It would still be a socialism for the trusts and big landowners. The little man has nothing to fear; he can only gain.

The petty bourgeoisie themselves either furnish the Nazis with personnel or passively tolerate the tyranny. At most, they whisper among themselves that something has to be changed. What? That they do not know. And so far they have not made the slightest attempt to reach an agreement with other strata of the population. They are the pawns of the present regime. However, the absolute majority lies with the workers and the poor peasants; it would be sufficient if these two strata would act together systematically. Their unity would actually be the beginning of the people's front.

Taken as a whole, the peasants as well as the workers really reject the Nazi state. Have they reached an agreement and are they proceeding towards unity? They are resisting, each group in its own fashion. The peasants would rather risk the most terrible consequences than obey orders which would starve them and ruin their land. The workers hold to their illegal unions in spite of the mass trial, torture, and the scaffold. Granaries burn down as frequently as munition dumps. The secret police force, which exists only to torture the people, keeps a close watch on every single citizen. They cannot prevent sabotage; they can only hinder the open, systematic formation of the people's front. But the great proletarian masses, workers and peasants, know that salvation lies in the words "people's front," and they realize that they must act accordingly.

The workers represent the most enlightened stratum in Germany. This does not mean that they are as thoroughly informed as a free people would be about the situation in the world at large or about conditions within their own country. They have sunk to the level of forced laborers; they have been stripped of all freedom; they are mentally fettered by unscrupulous propaganda; they are forbidden to tune in on foreign broadcasts. The foreign press reaches them only clandestinely, but it does reach them. The workers alone, among all the classes in Germany, receive news from abroad. Their party leaders are in constant connection with the party leaders across the frontiers. The workers have their international organizations. That is the reason for the particular feeling of strength against a state that weighs most heavily upon them. In their consciousness, they contrast it with other powers, hoping that these will be stronger in the end.

IF OTHER CLASSES were also conscious of being connected to the world at large, the German people's front would have been at once an accomplished fact. Meanwhile, the regime has succeeded in cutting them off from the world, especially the intellectuals. The first and foremost concern of the Nazis was to deprive the people of its intellectual leaders. One must add that there never were many of them. The German intellectuals were for the most part not even a link between the people and the ruling class. Scarcely possessing an intellectual superiority, they were petty bourgeois who shared with the middle class its mental tractability and social ineffectiveness. How otherwise can we explain that such masses of intellectuals—scientists, jurists, writers, artists, as well as technicians, officials, and white-collar employees—could suddenly renounce independent thinking? The enemies of the "intellectual beasts" had merely to assume power, and no intellectuals were left in Germany. Immediately they all had the same prescribed *Weltanschauung;* and those who prescribed it were very insignificant people, in the lowest ranks of the professions. These nonentities had, however, risen to power through circumstances not of their own making. Their own sense of power is just as small as that of their class, the middle class.

This applies to the majority, though there are, of course, exceptions. As a class, the workers can only be highly esteemed; viewed as individuals they sometimes appear in a different light. Among them one finds traitors to their own class, strike-breakers, stool-pigeons, and some strata of workers who are Nazis as long as they earn more than their

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fellow-workmen. For this reason, the regime lets a few shifts alternate in earning more than others. But such tricks do not prevent the working class from offering the most promise. On the other hand, some intellectuals take a much more definite stand than one would ever have expected from people of their class. There is, for example, an old woman, a historian and novelist, who has proudly kept her independence of mind in spite of the philistines and the power of the state. There was a surgeon whom they tried to bribe with all sorts of titles and honors, but who correctly called them philistines. There are more men of this sort, but they would probably be found on the side of the old Right.

This complete disappearance of the intellectual Left is characteristic of the men who had been the leaders—though only the apparent leaders—during the republic. They should have defended the former ideology of the civilized state, but what have they ever defended? Now they stand at attention for the Nazis in order to appear as though they are permeated with the official *Weltanschauung*. Many even overstep the bounds of decency. As we know, all of the Left who had some importance have emigrated, or been tortured and murdered at home. The politicians* emigrated with the intellectuals. What differentiates them in exile? Abroad, the politician without party or governmental office becomes an ordinary intellectual like the others. He reaches the German masses, now separated from him by guarded frontiers, just as the writer does. It is this situation above all that has brought the idea of the people's front to the German Left.

The German Lefts would still not have thought of accepting the people's front, especially because before their exile they could not visualize themselves united. A politician in exile made the pointed remark that "writers must now be taken seriously." On the other hand, the writers have been led to the realization that without the apparatus of the large socialist parties, they would not be able to utter a word. Internationally known names are not sufficient. Neither can a party apparatus alone accomplish anything. Only the union of both political and literary talents, on the one hand, and the resources of an organization, on the other, can create a real force. Thus the German Left was made a power, even in exile. It might be more correct to say that it became a power through the exiles.

The "sense of power" was not developed by the Left while it was "in power." It preferred to share it with others. It was afraid of the responsibility as well as of its own unity. But now, in exile, they have at last understood both this responsibility and unity, though they have not quite been able entirely to achieve the latter. It is hard to believe, but even today the German Left has its irresponsible elements. To these, it seems more important to harm a comrade than to overthrow Hitler. Some hardly wish to overthrow him. They prefer to remain exiles for the rest of their lives, and to make pessimistic analyses of reality. Thus do these elements continue the old mental gymnastics of the German Left which ultimately led to defeat.

Except for some regrettable incidents and certain individuals and groups, who could not be counted on under any circumstances, the émigré Left has understood the idea of the popular front. They are doing their best towards a realization of this idea. An eminent Frenchman not long ago admitted that we Germans had striven harder and accomplished more than any other group of émigrés. We have established contacts with our country, and are using them. The German workers and members of other classes know about us; they know that we have more than once been responsible for international demonstrations and mass meetings for world peace and against fascism. The mere existence of a committee for the formation of a German people's front encourages millions to struggle for it, although this means risking their lives. Under these circumstances, the realization of the people's front means also its victory. A fascist state that can no longer separate its enemies is lost. Their unity is its end.

Abbott

AFTER considering all adverse circumstances —the tactics employed by the Nazi state as well as the traditional behavior of the German character in general and the German Left in particular—it becomes evident that the popular front came because it had to come. The alternative is death. Everybody knows that the Hitler regime represents nothing but death. Death is even nearer for the Germans at home than for those abroad. Those left behind see themselves driven to war. The first victims of war whom the regime demanded for Spain have filled the people with terror. The fear of war is greater in Germany than anywhere else. All the noisy propaganda of the government is in reality an empty sham; their fear, however, has a deep and silent content. A people cannot be embittered against its government, cannot suffer unceasing abuse, and still wage foreign wars. On top of this, the Germans are expected to attack; they fully realize that they are being misused for aggressive purposes. They have not the slightest faith in the cause of their rulers, who cannot help revealing that they have lost faith in their own cause and are dependent on the crumbling past. Any day can bring an end to their glory.

The fear of war does its share; the rest is accomplished by the agitation for peace, by the continuous international struggle to make war impossible for National Socialist Germany, to sap its war strength both morally and physically. The German Opposition participates in all efforts in this direction. Peace, Hitler's greatest enemy, is its ally. With the help of peace, this opposition will forge the German people's front.

* The German word *"Politiker"* does not carry the derogatory connotation implied by its closest English equivalent, "politicians."—TRANS.

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The Yanks under Fire in Spain

Although it was their first experience of warfare, they held the center at Jarama like seasoned troops

By James Hawthorne

WITH THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BATTALION.—In this sector of the Jarama battle-front, in the Spanish war of independence against international fascism, five hundred American anti-fascists held the key position during one of the greatest battles of this war. From the vague concepts of modern warfare they might have nourished in training camp, they passed in less than twenty-four hours to the inconceivably cruel realities. Punished and horrified, they became veterans by that swift transformation process that tests the fundamental fiber of a man. When the battle was over, they had suffered heavy losses, performed a heroic service to the cause of world progress, and justified their long journey.

Both wings of the semi-circular line in which they found themselves in late February were occupied by brigades of the Spanish People's Army: the regular army, comparable to the best, that exists in the center area. Some two thirds of the line was held by these Spanish forces, among whom one sees the faces of mere children, the incredibly brave volunteers who performed the miracle of the defense of Madrid. The center of the line extends over two hills and a hollow. The International Brigades, especially the Fifteenth, were entrusted with guarding the center.

The hill on the right center (facing the fascists) is considerably higher than the one on the left. Beneath and between them lies a flat area about one hundred yards wide, sloping evenly down from the rebel lines to the government trenches, which are about sixty feet behind the line of trenches on either side.

Into this weak position the green American volunteers were moved before daylight one morning in the last days of February. On their right they found the approach to their trenches protected by machine guns on the hill where the British battalions had fortified themselves during two weeks of attack and counter-attack. Beyond the British, the Franco-Belgian Battalion linked the line to Lister's men, Spanish veterans who probably average twenty years of age. On the left, the slighter eminence was held by one of Madrid's best mixed brigades, another pride of the Spanish People's Army. In front of them lay the olive-planted no-man's land through which they could see the fresh dirt being thrown up as the fascists deepened their trenches.

Across the bat slope, rifle and machine-gun bullets whistled twenty-four hours a day. "This is a windy position," the brigade runner explained as he took me through the lines. Truth to tell, it was a poorly fortified trench, completely dominated by rebel machine guns pouring fire close to the ground from their higher levels. They could see over the parapet of our trench. The olive grove in front was a garden of death. It was crossed and criss-crossed by machine-gun fire from both wings of both lines, and striped by direct fire from the trenches immediately opposite. The grotesque figures of men stiffened with long death lay there. It was a dangerous task to bring in dead and wounded. Under the trees, the bodies of Moors and Nazis marked the recent failure of a rebel attack. Small exploring parties, handfuls of men, wandered into this territory at night, but rarely recovered a half-dozen bodies without attracting fire even under cover of dark.

Hardly had the Lincoln Battalion occupied this edge of no-man's land, than an attack was launched. It was not yet light when the artillery preparations began. The men of the battalion had never heard the threatening moan of an approaching shell. They had never heard the thin whistle of a stray rifle bullet. Their ears were unaccustomed to the crisp spatter of a dumdum slug striking the sand-bags on the trench parapet, or the crackle of explosive bullets in the air. One could hear the bang of enemy rifles close behind the explosion of the bullets, so near were the rebel trenches. A few of the men had seen the World War, but that was a long time ago. Only a very few had ever heard the sound of cannon. There was never a man whose nerves didn't twitter in those first hours of fire. The flashes in the sky, where the reflection of flame shooting from a cannon's mouth makes lightning, caused the momentary appearance of shadows in the solid dark. All the décor of hell. You peer tensely through the black vacuum for another movement where that shadow darted. Was it that the light threw a tree into sudden relief and then blotted it out, or was it a rebel darting swiftly from one protection to another? Another movement, the shadow of a movement, in the grove. You fire, the machine gun spits four or five angry needles of fire. A rifle cracks and the whee-e-e of a stray tells you that someone in the opposite trenches is trying to locate the machine gun. There is no more movement. Did we get him? Or was it never more than a swaying of a tree?

DAY CAME slowly through a misty rain. Then the sun broke over the clouds. Under the trees, here and there, a body. Perhaps there had been a rebel attack in the night, driven back by those sheets of artillery fire. More likely, only a scouting party, trying to drag itself unseen to within hand-grenade range of the weak spot in the government lines. The sun began to thaw out the damp chill of the Jarama night. The artillery had never let up. Yet after the early-morning attack, the air seemed still. Through the relative stillness, the drone of airplane motors brought the faces of the infantry up in that instinctive but dangerous search for the intruder. There were four rebel ships above them.

Scott Johnston

Two Junkers, bombers, had recklessly visited the lines with only two pursuit ships to protect them. A single bomb dropped. The Americans cowered in their shallow trench. Their first bomb. Whoever has heard the roar of those terrible engines of destruction, has heard it close at hand, knows the wonderment at finding himself alive, untouched by the hot, flying metal. The upturned faces (which help a pilot locate an objective), shining like mirrors up to the plane, had been drawn back into the shadow of the trench. Only a direct hit could hurt them. The Junkers maneuvered to get directly over the line of trenches without drawing anti-aircraft fire. Another bomb sent up its inverted cone of black smoke, metal, dirt, stone-dust. In the dying echoes of its roar, a new whir sounded. Two government planes, flying low, hidden from eyes above by the color of the ground, shot out of nowhere to give battle. The racing of a motor, the sound peculiar to a swiftly climbing plane, reached the trenches well after the loyalist planes zoomed up at a sharp angle. (They are immeasurably better climbers than any of the German and Italian planes of late model in the rebel camp.) The faint crackle of many machine guns floated down as the battle began. One rebel chaser was hit, corkscrewed, straightened out, lost control again, and fell hopelessly in a barrel roll behind the loyal lines. A government pursuit ship soared over the two bombers, dived nose-down, pouring hundreds of bullets through the intervening space as its four automatic guns barked excitedly. Explosive bullets hit the ground and burst in no-man's land and around the rebel front lines. Suddenly one of the bombers burst into a sausage of flame and fell like a paper in the wind, at a reluctant pace, gradually lower, out of sight behind the

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rebel third line. It had hardly disappeared, when the diving, maneuvering, swallow-like government pursuers simultaneously obtained positions under the remaining rebel chaser and, climbing swiftly, poured deadly fire through it. Explosive bullets found the gas tanks, and set off the target. The lighter construction of a chaser burns like straw, and it burst into falling flares, torches, cinders, and the heavy motor dragged it swift as a falling star to a roaring burial in the damp clay beneath. The remaining bomber had fled.

In our lines the boys watched the world's greatest fire-works display with the enthusiasm not of spectators but of participants. For it could not escape anyone in the front lines, not even the veterans of only one night, that the battle overhead was only a continuation of the one on the ground. The failure of the rebel aviation, the lack of success of the artillery, meant that loyal aviation, artillery, and machine guns remained exactly where they were before, ready for an attack. The attack never came. Instead, loyal fire—loyal and rebel fire had halted for the spectacle of the clouds—silenced the rifles and machine guns of the depressed troops in the lines beyond no-man's land.

The day passed with a thousand tasks of organizing the position. Food service, first aid, liaison, munitions, fortification. Trucks brought food supplies from Morata to the cook-house, a matter of perhaps five miles of winding road through the hills. Trucks carried the hot meals again from the cook-house, past the first-aid station a half-mile beyond, to the top of the hill overlooking the second-line reserve, and turned coolly around under direct observation of rebel artillerymen, before distributing the food. The heavy pots were hung on poles, and two men balanced the poles on their shoulders for a quarter of a mile. Not that the front lines were a quarter of a mile away. They were just a few feet away over the hill behind which the second-line shelters were constructed. But there was no traffic over the bullet-swept hill. A round-about route was necessary. Appetites were good despite the nervousness of a first day under fire.

At night, the artillery fire increased. The lads of the Lincoln Battalion were already somewhat indifferent to that. By morning, they were also contemptuous of mortar bombs. Those whizzing, noisy projectiles proved, like shells and air bombs, to be effective only on direct hit against entrenched troops. The three major weapons of moral effect had inflicted only three minor injuries on them, and these largely because of some carelessness in keeping low. The persistent machine-gun fire on their still poorly protected position had taken several victims as they stood on the fire-steps, shooting at tell-tale flashes from the line never more than two hundred yards away. The rebels had managed to remove all their dead that night. Morning found the olive grove, with its turned red clay, clear of bodies.

In mid-morning, without warning, the Americans went over the top. Cubans, Irish, Yanks—their commanders gave the order; their section leaders repeated it. Captain Seacord, Captain Rodolfo, leader of Joven Cuba, and Captain Merriman, went first. On their heels the battalion. Lack of experience, perhaps, but anti-fascist conviction as well, found expression in that reckless, head-up, full-length position in which so many advanced. The machine guns raced; there was not a moment's halt. The spitting, halting, barking was replaced by a pervasive rat-tat-tat. The boys learned quickly. From cover to cover they ran low. Dropping behind every shelter, they waited. Some made the mistake of trusting olive trees on high ground, but only the hollows were safe from the low-traveling stream of machine-gun bullets. The fire was murderous over so narrow a strip, so limited an area. Fire and cross-fire. A network and stripes. As they drew further away from their trench, loyal bullets sang overhead. Seacord, Merriman, Rodolfo, fell. Wounded men lay still; they could only wait for night, it was impossible to retreat in that hail of lead. The fire was intense, but the line had to be strengthened. They advanced. Seacord and Rodolfo would advance no more. Merriman had only a wound in the shoulder. Advance!

Chet La More (A. C. A. Print Group)

AT DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTERS, I talked with General Gall. "The Americans covered themselves with glory," he stated simply and with conviction. "They are good soldiers." But not just soldiers. He had been stirred by the information that the dead were recovered with their arms stiff in the revolutionary salute.

At the first line hospital, where Dr. Pike sends virtually all cases as soon as he has given first aid, a Hungarian doctor was told I was American. He ran over to me, clasped both my hands, and told me in a French confused by his emotion: "I have been wanting to tell, to let Americans know, what wonderful boys they sent here. Here all the wounded of all nationalities, mostly Spanish, pass on their way to all other hospitals and evacuation points. There are none like the Americans. The Spaniards and the Internationals are not weaklings; they are the pick of anti-fascist fighters. Yet no other group displays the persistent tendency to mask pain, to make light of wounds, that marks the Americans. I remember a Negro with a bullet right through his stomach, who could still manage a wide smile. And they are all like that."

On March 3, I visited the battalion again. I shared a shelter with a machine-gunner. He had a candle lighted, and began at once to dig out amazing things. A thermos bottle, which, he shamelessly assured me, he had "copped" from under a guard's nose. Hadn't the Belgians stolen a case of cigarettes from the Lincoln Battalion? The bottle was full of good hot coffee. Then he had bread, butter, and cheese! Madrid hasn't seen butter and cheese for a long time, but the fighters still get these delicacies. It is a sure sign of veteranship when the morale of the men is high enough to permit them to take the initiative in providing themselves with night snacks and extras. Scared men let everything take care of itself. That our machine-gunners were war-hardened was soon ever more perfectly demonstrated. A terrific attack began—but the meal was uninterrupted. In fact, it was only when an angry guard crawled up to our dugout complaining that our light was visible two hundred yards away, that my bunkmate, leisurely putting away the food stores, blew out the candle. Overhead the bullets whistled, the shells moaned; mortar bombs exploded at hand.

"Well, we'd beter catch a little sleep," decided the machine-gunner. "Good-night."

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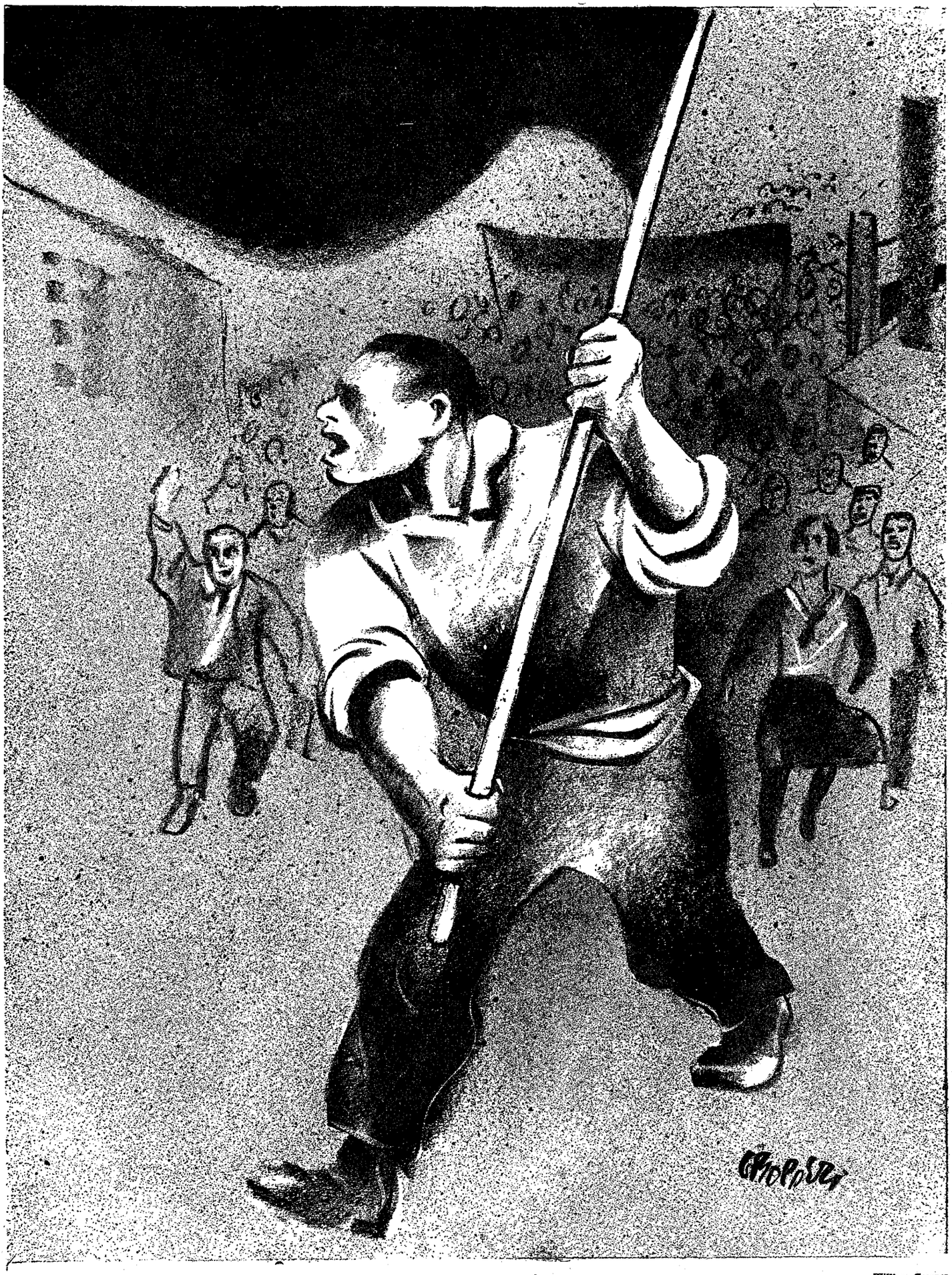

William Gropper

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Covering the events of the week ending April 26, 1937

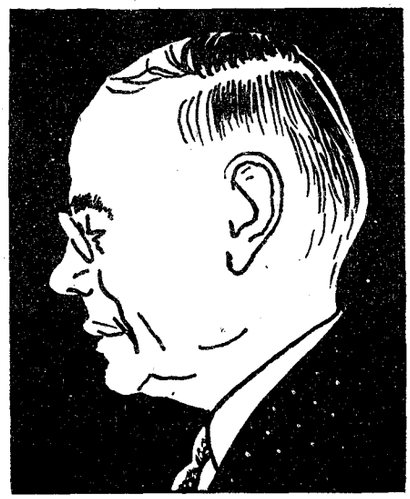
THE dollar sign dominated the Washington sky during the week, and its prominence boded no good for the millions of American unemployed. The anticipated crisis in the relief situation came with the delivery of the President's budget message to Congress, an ominous capitulation to the most reactionary forces in the country. Calling for no new taxes, the President asked for a relief appropriation of $1,500,000,000, or $1,100,000,000 less than the sum appropriated last year. According to the Workers' Alliance, the amount asked by Roosevelt will mean the elimination of more than half a million workers from the rolls of the W.P.A. The Alliance, declaring the fight had only begun, prepared to battle for a higher appropriation "as the first line of defense for trade-union standards everywhere." Officials of the organization presented figures showing that at least three billion dollars are needed to provide even the minimum wants of America's unemployed. And of the forty-eight state governors, only two, according to an Associated Press survey, favored such a reduction in the work-relief program as the Roosevelt proposal would make mandatory.

Aside from hardship for the unemployed implicit in the President's budget message, progressives saw in it an even more dangerous aspect. It had all the appearance of serving as an opening wedge for further reaction, as encouragement to those who would prune all government aid drastically in the name of economy and a balanced budget. Immediate developments following the message gave justification for these fears. A whispering campaign got quickly under way conveying the threat of heavy tax increases next year, including a sales tax, unless even more drastic slashes in relief and other federal expenditures were forthcoming. A group under Senator Byrnes (D., S. C.) announced its determination to fight for a relief appropriation slashed down to an even billion, and a group of Republicans led by Representative Taber of New York urged 10-percent cuts in every appropriation to be made throughout the session. In its first test, the Taber proposal was roundly defeated, but it was feared that to a great extent the defeat was largely due to an unwillingness on the part of the Democrats to let their political rivals get any of the credit for economies.

NOT all Congressmen were prepared to follow the Roosevelt lead. Accepting the Workers' Alliance demands, Representative Boileau (Prog., Wis.) opened a fight for his Public Works and Relief Standards bill, calling for a relief appropriation of $3,000,000,000. And another progressive group, under Representative Maverick (D., Tex.) demanded an appropriation of $2,500,000,000. The Maverick bill allows for an increase in the W.P.A. wage scale of 5 percent, and the Boileau bill for a raise of 20 percent, to keep pace with the rising cost of living. David Lasser, national president of the Workers' Alliance, expressed regret that the House progressive forces were being "divided and weakened" by differences in the two bills, and hoped that they would all unite behind the $3,000,000,000 measure.

Big business kept up its barrage of demands that Congress "balance" the effects of the Supreme Court's Wagner Act decisions by imposing drastic restrictions on labor unions. But testimony before the LaFollette subcommittee continued to reveal that all the balancing still to be done is in the direction of further protection for labor in its right of collective bargaining. "Bloody Harlan" County, Ky., held the spotlight. "Nobody knows," commented the capitalistic New York *Times*, "how many men have gone into Harlan County to organize the miners and have mysteriously disappeared, nor does anybody know how many silently fled for their lives." Testifying before the committee, Lawrence A. Howard, a young miner, reported that Harlan County deputies had offered him $100 to shoot a union organizer. Back at his hotel, following this testimony, Howard was told over the telephone to get back to Harlan or "be buried in Arlington."

High spot of the week's hearings came with the charge that mine superintendent Ted Creech had actually threatened one of the witnesses with a long prison term when he got back to Harlan. Creech was also accused of "running around with a machine gun" terrorizing union organizers. The mine operator categorically denied the charges, but the testimony of other witnesses was so convincing that he was indicted for perjury.



Joe Bartlett

Green—He overlooked "details"

By way of tempering a generally reactionary week in the capital, Attorney-General Cummings launched the most far-reaching anti-trust action since Standard Oil was declared a monopoly in 1911. The object of the federal suit was the Aluminum Co. of America, a $174,000,000 empire controlled wholly by Andrew Mellon and his associates. The company had collected a total of $155,241,807 in profits up to the end of 1934, over and above dividends amounting to $105,000,000. "Profits of such size," said the complaint, with extreme restraint, "are excessive and result from defendant's monopolization of this industry."

ALSO tempering the ultra-conservative week in Washington was the Supreme Court's five-to-four decision reversing the conviction of Angelo Herndon, saving him from an eighteen- to twenty-year chain-gang sentence and possible death. The decision, made possible by "one lone man," Justice Roberts, was the culmination of a five-year struggle on the part of progressive opinion the country over in behalf of the young Negro Communist's freedom. Great significance was attached to the court stand, which not only freed young Herndon but, in the opinion of left-wing leaders, has made it possible for the Communist Party to carry on active work in Georgia, to distribute literature and to solicit members openly and legally. Indicative of the great rejoicing caused by the decision was the spontaneous demonstration at the New York Hippodrome, where Herndon made his first public appearance at a memorial meeting for Ben Leider, American aviator killed in action in Spain: 2500 people cheered him, standing in the aisles, for fully five minutes before the meeting was able to get under way again after his entrance.

FOLLOWING up his verbal attacks against the Committee for Industrial Organization—attacks which have hindered the work of the militant C.I.O. since its formation—A.F. of L. President William Green took active steps toward splitting the American labor movement by expelling the C.I.O. unions. Reaching a new low in its activities, the executive Council of the A.F. of L. openly gave ammunition to the enemies of genuine labor organization when it confirmed the granting of a charter to the vigilante-led company union in the zinc and lead sections of Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma. The outfit thus honored was the notorious "Blue-Card" Tri-State Metal, Mine, & Smelter Union, whose president is F. W. Evans, a mine operator and ex-convict. The group was founded in 1935 for the purpose of breaking the strike of the Mine, Mill, & Smelter Workers' Union before it became affiliated with the C.I.O. Since then, the chief activity of the group has consisted of terroristic acts against unionists, cul-

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minating in the destruction of union headquarters at Galena, Kan., two weeks ago. When confronted with proof that he had granted a charter to a company union headed by a mine operator and, moreover, that its wrecking activities were among the most notorious on record, Green's reply was the feeble: "I must confess I am not familiar with all the details."

Twenty-five thousand New York railway workers were on the verge of taking strike action as this issue went to press. Those likely to be involved were members of the Brotherhood of Railway & Steamship Clerks, Freight Handlers, Express & Station Employees. No order to strike had been given, according to George Price, general chairman of the Brotherhood's negotiating committee; but, said Price, "there were strong indications that a strike would be called . . . I wouldn't be a damn bit surprised." Railroads that would be affected by such a strike are: Baltimore & Ohio; Reading-New Jersey Central; Erie; Lehigh Valley; New York Central; New York, New Haven, & Hartford; Long Island, and Pennsylvania. Last-minute attempts at mediation were in progress between Brotherhood representatives and employers and the National Mediation Board as this issue went to press, with the possibility that the entire dispute would reach the hands of Roosevelt.

MORE than 3,000 auto workers in Oshowa, Ont., returned to work at the Canadian General Motors plants after a three-week strike, following an agreement which won them most of their demands except "formal recognition" of the United Automobile Workers, a C.I.O. affiliate. At an enthusiastic mass meeting, the workers swore their allegiance to the C.I.O. and cheered Hugh Thompson, Premier Hepburn's "paid foreign agitator," when he called the meeting's attention to the date of the expiration of the agreement on June 11. "Watch June 11," Thompson said. "We will have our day on June 11."

Another 3000 workers — shoe strikers in Lewiston, Me.—defied a court warning of Judge Harry Manser (to the effect that any protests "might influence his decision on the question of closing the shoe strikers' commissary and relief kitchen") by rallying *en masse* before the city hall. They heard Powers Hapgood, strike leader and C.I.O. organizer, say: "There's only one way they're going to close the commissary and that's at the point of a bayonet. And I'm willing to stand alongside anyone here to fight those fellows. . . ." Mrs. Hapgood added: "If they close it, the blood will be on their hands, not on ours."

In Stockton, Cal., where cannery workers remained on strike, steps were taken by the State Federation of Labor to form a new union which would take over the workers who are members of the Agricultural Workers' Union and those under the more conservative Modesto Cannery Workers' Union. The move apparently had the backing of the Agricultural Workers' Union, which originally called the strike; the A.W.U. announced the passage of a resolution calling for the formation of a large union of cannery workers. In Richmond, Cal., striking auto workers, members of the U.A.W., won a victory against Henry Ford when an agreement was signed which guaranteed no discrimination against any man for union affiliation or activity. The agreement also recognized seniority rights, which was hailed as a victory by Organizer Ed Hall.

Schuschnigg—He was let down

With labor active over the entire American industrial front, and with smaller skirmishes rounding out the week's highlight pictures, John Brophy, director of the C.I.O., issued letters of instruction to local industrial unions throughout the country on methods of securing C.I.O. charters. As the A.F. of L. was receding more strongly into its reactionary position, it was expected that the C.I.O. charter move would swell the ranks of the new industrial unions by thousands within the next few months.

OLD-WORLD diplomacy spent a hectic week, pregnant with far-reaching changes in the map of Europe. Dictator Benito Mussolini of Italy and Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg of Austria were the chief negotiators. Dictator Adolf Hitler of Germany hoped to be the chief beneficiary. Chancellor Schuschnigg came to Rome for a two-day conference with Mussolini at which he hoped to gain support against Hitler's long-feared thrust for unification (*Anschluss* to the Germans) of Austria and Germany, with the former the bottom dog. He left, much chastened, with a fairly clear picture of the extent to which the so-called "Rome-Berlin axis" is working out in favor of Berlin.

Mussolini high-handedly rejected Schuschnigg's advocacy of Hapsburg restoration in Austria as a preventative for *Anschluss,* even warning the Austrian Chancellor not even to attempt to bring Otto to the throne. He made it plain that Italy's traditional policy of guaranteeing Austrian independence by holding crack army divisions in a state of permanent emergency on the Brenner Pass was a thing of the past. Correspondent Arnaldo Cortesi of the New York *Times* summed up this phase of the conference with the words: "The conclusion cannot be escaped, however, that Mussolini has abandoned Austria to her fate as far as *Anschluss* is concerned."

In the midst of the Schuschnigg-Mussolini talks, editor Virginio Gayda of the semi-official Roman newspaper, *Giornale d'Italia,* caused sensation and fright in Vienna and joyful expectancy in Berlin by forecasting that Austrian Nazis would soon enter the Austrian government. The Austrian reaction was so unfavorable that Gayda penned an editorial two days later largely nullifying his prophecy, but the damage had been done. An official *communiqué* was issued at the conclusion of the conference, notable chiefly because it omitted all mention of Austrian independence and because it stipulated the return of Germany to "active participation" in Central European affairs. It was also understood that Schuschnigg sought to induce Mussolini to tolerate an Austro-Czechoslovakian alliance for mutual protection, but the Italian dictator, again in the role of Hitler's broker, barred any such agreement without permission of both Italy and Hungary. In the main, observers interpreted the week's negotiations as definitely establishing a division of labor between Europe's two chief fascist states: Germany seeks fascist domination in Central Europe while Italy seeks fascist domination over the Mediterranean world.

DURING a week with little actual fighting anywhere but on the Basque front itself, five British ships exploded insurgents' assertions that they could establish a blockade off the coast of Bilbao. According to the *Week,* well-informed confidential British information service, Downing Street decided to protect British merchant vessels on the high seas only after a round-robin protest by British officers with the Mediterranean Fleet against further surrender to Mussolini's blackmailing diplomacy. It is further asserted by the *Week* that the Baldwin government sought to compromise with an aroused public opinion to the extent of protecting the food ships already at St.-Jean-de-Luz, French port, but that further shipments will be "tactfully" prevented. In any event, the thousands of tons of food did much to hearten the Basque defenders, despite forced retreats in the Enchorta range of mountains, twenty miles from Bilbao.

The rebels, reinforced with Italian regulars from San Sebastian, successfully advanced within three miles from Durango, sixteen miles southeast of Bilbao. Capture of the village of El Orrio, outpost of Durango, forced the Basques to reorganize their defense by giving complete authority to a special defense council over the entire war area. The council at once reorganized the Basque militia into mobile, small brigades and ordered a desperate counter-attack to regain the lost territory. Observers believed that the rebels may encounter difficulty in forcing the Basque capital to surrender because all of their reserves have been thrust into the siege, now thirty days old, whereas the defenders still have much.

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The Social Magic of the Sit-Down

The contrast between two Detroiters indicts the old way and hints the new

By Joseph North

DETROIT.—KILLER DAYTON DEAN of the Black Legion talked to me and I understood the old Detroit. John Weaver, Hudson sit-downer, talked to me and I understood the new Detroit. The old and the new, in these two young men, both Hoosiers, both about five-foot seven, both fathers of children: one, the killer; one, the union man.

Both had an idea. One old, the other new. I saw the new idea win.

I watched 1937 Detroit, overseas cap cocked on his narrow Nordic head—watched him in the purple glare of the arc lights on the fourth floor of the Hudson Motor Co. works, that beleaguered proletarian fortress in the heart of Detroit. Eleven thousand men worked here three weeks ago today. Today it was held by the deputies of these eleven thousand—the sit-downers.

The ghastly light turned his face blue, as it did the entire plant. These blue-faced men seemed like something unhuman, like some new species of human. There they stood alongside the frozen belt, the half-built tonneaus perched high in the self-same spot since somebody signaled "Sit Down!" twenty-one days before.

The men seemed like sentries on some unknown no-man's land. Sentries armed only with an idea. That idea in the heads of three hundred thousand automobile workmen at one time proved mightier than all the lethal weapons Hudson, General Motors, Chrysler had stacked in their storerooms.

I talked with Dayton Dean stripped of his horrific regalia of skull and bones, without revolver, and I saw Henry Ford's Detroit. He, too, had an idea, this Dayton Dean, the killer, a barbaric idea, a concept out of mediævalism, fed him by the erstwhile omnipotent barons of the automobile land.

"I'm an American," Dayton Dean told me. "I went through the eighth grade in school. I worked for the city, in the Lighting Commission. My organization is older than the Ku-Klux Klan. It's as old as Columbus. I'm an American . . . I followed instructions . . . I never asked questions . . . soldiers don't ask questions . . . I obeyed my superior officer . . . I killed. . . . "

He helped light Detroit, worked in the Lighting Commission. He killed. Not once or twice, but many times, as often as his superior officers commanded.

Before he talked he looked like anybody you might find in the bleachers of Detroit's ball park any warm spring day. When he spoke, you could see him inside the Black Legion robe, revolvers smoking in both fists, dead-pan mug behind the mask. He had an idea too, Henry Ford's idea, and it poisoned him with a deadlier effect than arsenic.

Half a century ago, when American workingmen began celebrating May First, the fight for the eight-hour day was uppermost in the minds of American unionists. This year the great wave of sit-down strikes holds the center of the stage. Therefore, we are marking labor's holiday by publishing the accompanying four articles on this historic development in American labor history.—The Editors.

I sat with the sit-downers in the purple glare and I thought of him, Dayton Dean, with whom I had spoken earlier that day in his well-appointed cell at headquarters. Neat he was, hair parted in the middle, shoes gleaming, his cheeks ruddy, a killer.

I looked at John Weaver, bony-faced, in blue jeans and work shirt, overseas cap on his tousled head, eyes bloodshot from lack of sleep, hands hard with toil, a union man.

Both Hoosiers, both young men, both fathers of children. But with a different idea.

I looked out the window at Detroit, grimy Detroit that stretches endlessly across the flatlands of Michigan where the wolverines once ran, and where, as far as your eye can see, there stands the auto monopoly.

John Heliker

The city is only incidentally bounded by rivers, landmarks, hillocks. Actually it is hemmed in east, west, north, and south, by Ford, Chrysler, General Motors, Hudson.

I stood there a few feet from John Weaver and looked at the city. Thirty years ago it boasted 250,000 souls, a trading center in farm country, Michiganers driving teams and pulling potatoes to feed the Midwest. It has multiplied six-fold since that time, swelled up like a poisoned frog, almost overnight, into the fourth biggest metropolis in the Western Hemisphere. In 1901, Olds manufactured 411 machines. Today this Detroit turns out cars by the million annually.

The lights twinkled below, the neon signs shivered, and far off you could see the giant script of Ford. This, the miracle of America, had put a planet on wheels.

It had imprisoned a million workmen.

I looked at John Weaver sitting there, overseas cap cocked on a side.

"I worked in auto for ten years," he told me. "Ten years on the belt and never owned a car." Built autos for ten years, never owned a car.

Until today, literally, a prisoner of Henry Ford, of General Motors. Captive of the open shop. In Detroit the old, the slogan was smash the union, legally if possible, Black Legion if necessary. Gun, faggot, rope; injunction, prison, statute. Interchangeable.

John Weaver, prisoner, like Dayton Dean. Until he got an idea.

Christmas, 1936, Frank X. Martel, craft-union chieftain of the A.F. of L., would have gloated if he could have added thirty thousand organized workmen together on his lists. Easter time I saw 150,000 workmen on Cadillac Square, the greatest strike demonstration in American history. It was C.I.O., industrial unionism.

John Weaver, prisoner of the open shop, had smashed the ring, stripped Dayton Dean of his black robes, forced Sloan down from his penthouse, Murphy from his gubernatorial mansion, knocked on F. D. R.'s front door. John Weaver, who never owned a car, but who had an idea.

I SPOKE with the men inside the plant. How come the sit-down? Whose idea? Why at this time? Why?

They don't tell what it's like to work on the belt. But I watched them earlier that

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day at Henry Ford's in Dearborn. Saw how the belt moves inexorably, pitilessly, on the man, his eyes glued to his task, his wheel, his spoke, his bolt. Put it on, fasten it, keep time with the belt, move on, move on, brother, here comes the rear, here comes the next car. Eight hours, four hundred and eighty minutes, every second an agony, move on, move on, brother.

John Weaver doesn't talk much, and when he does, it's in single sentences. "They speed the hell out of us," he said.

I saw the plug-uglies of Henry Ford stand at the gate eyeing each visitor, standing there chewing terbaccy, rear pockets bulging. Harry Bennett, the high-class gangster, their chieftain, captain of 7500 "service men" toughs to teach you your place. I couldn't tell you who were the stools inside the plant.

John Weaver talks in single sentences. "They got the joint lousy with stools," he said.

John Weaver lives in a little house, five rooms, at the other end of town. Takes an hour on the trolley car to get home. An hour in the morning to get to work. Pays thirty-seven dollars a month rent. Pays twenty-eight cents for a pound of meat. Pays thirteen cents for a quart of milk. Three kids, three quarts of milk every day. Makes thirty-five dollars a week when he works.

"We're two weeks ahead of starvation when we work," John Weaver says in his one sentence.

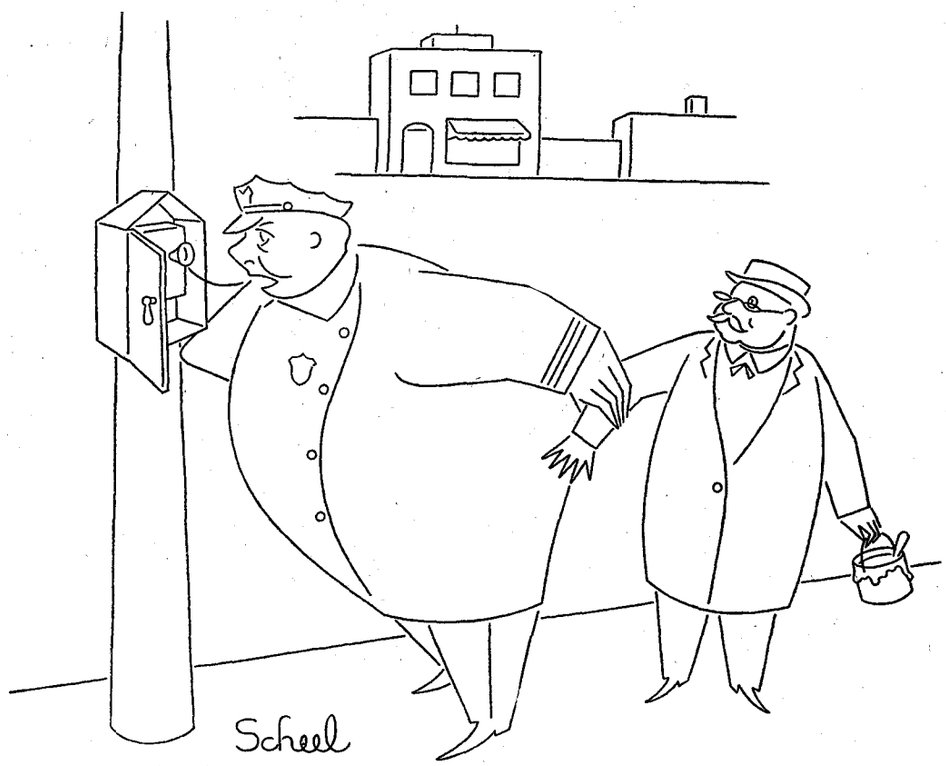
Workmen somehow never use the superlative, yet there was a superlative in every phase of this strike. It *did* happen to be the greatest example of labor solidarity in the history of America. Sixty thousand turned out to picket Chrysler, all at one time. At Flint, cars trundled in from Toledo, Detroit, all wayside towns, with workers and their women folk to turn the police back at what is now known as the Battle of Bulls Run.

"They're sticking together fine," John Weaver said to me. He threw another sentence in. "And the women folk, they're okay. The auxiliaries are all right."

All right! The red berets of Flint, the blue of Detroit, and the green of Toledo proved vital factors in every strike here. The women banded in auxiliaries, did heroic service, ready to take the rap for any of their actions in support of their men. They stood in the front lines at the battles in Flint, smashing windows in a strategic factory so that the tear gas the police would throw in would be diluted by fresh air.

"Why now?" I asked. "Why did you pick now for the sit-down?"

"Roosevelt," he said. "Murphy." Instinctive strategists, the men knew now was the time to strike; today, while the election was still hot in everybody's blood. The auto union drive began shortly after November 3. They had delivered a mandate to the President. They expected him to produce. They expected his colleague Murphy of Michigan to come across.



Theodore Scheel

"He's got a can of red paint, it's May Day, and that ain't all, Chief—he says his name is Marx!"

This time, more than ever before, I saw the workingman utilize political action simultaneously with economic action. He saw the value of hitting out on both fronts and hit he did. It was the sit-downers at Flint who sent a famous telegram to the governor in the midst of the turmoil, warning him they would resist any attempt to evict them, even if it meant the loss of their lives. "We are unarmed," they wired the governor. "There will surely be bloodshed if they try to evict us. The blood will be on your hands." The governor did not order the troops inside to rout them out.

BUT WHY the sit-down tactic? Why not the regular, old-fashioned walk-out strike? John Weaver did not know exactly why or who the unknown genius was who figured that one out. Was it the French in their wave of sit-downs? Or was it Akron the year before? Was it the extension of the commonplace "stoppage" so well known in the needle trades? Whoever it was, give credit to the infinite resourcefulness of the proletarian.

"It's like a game of bowling," John Weaver said. "Knock one pin down and they all come down." That's how he put it. What he understood was this: the highly rationalized, interdependent industry is exceptionally well suited to the sit-down strike. Tie up a strategic department and the whole works shuts down. Put a crimp in the belt at any one spot and the whole belt freezes.

Does John Weaver want to take over the entire industry? Is that why he sat down?

"We sat down because we figured we could win the strike that way" he said. "It's easier protecting yourself. Easier to keep scabs out. Simpler," he said.

He sat down because he wanted to protect his job, felt more secure near his machine. He stayed inside because he felt he belongs inside, he has spent the best part of his life inside, gave more of his muscle, bone, and brain inside here than anywhere else in the world. "Why the hell shouldn't we stay inside?" John Weaver asked.

As I sat listening to him talk here, inside the plant, I saw the old and the new, saw thesis and antithesis in their external struggle. I saw the acme of capitalist production. Production socialized to the maximum degree. Saw ten thousand men work like one man, put out machines that belonged to one man, not to ten thousand.

Here it was the social relations in mortal conflict with production relations. Here they grappled, collectivism versus individualism. The outworn, antiquated, social relations—yes, the Black Legion, the revolver, the prison bars—versus the modern, the streamlined, the brilliantly efficient production technique—consider the Ford V8.

Yes, here it is—Dayton Dean versus John Weaver. Here it is—Henry Ford versus 300,000 John Weavers. The old Detroit and the new Detroit.

I saw a world here changing from the old to the new. Saw the blue-faced men in the Hudson plant change in the crucible of class fire to the new men of Detroit—change to union men. I saw the Black Legion Detroit turning Union.

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The Psychology of the Sit-Down

Why has the new tactic taken the labor camp by storm? A social scientist advances some reasons

By Solomon Diamond

IT was recently reported in the press that the head of the psychology department at one of or universities—famous above all for the height of its skyscraper structure—had decided that the sit-down strikes were a "mental epidemic," in which many of "the sitters have not the slightest idea of why they are sitting." He added that the method would soon become laughable, and "once laughable, sit-downs will become useless"—a prediction which may bring some comfort to Andrew Mellon, who is sometimes said to own both the city of Pittsburgh and its university.

This is a fair expression of an attitude which has been quite general among psychologists, who have followed the individualistic bias of our social order by considering that "crowd behavior" is something inferior to individual behavior, and that in it the actions of people are determined less by their intelligence than by their emotions. It is a theory that fits in admirably with Henry Ford's, that every worker should shun unions as the plague. It has never been based upon a serious study of crowd phenomena or any other kind of cooperative activity. The sit-down strikes provide a good opportunity to test it. However, before turning to them, it is worth while to consider what the origins of this theory were.

The doctrine that people are necessarily more stupid and less civilized when they act together than when they act in isolation was first advanced in extended form by the Italian criminologist Sighele, in his book *The Criminal Crowd,* in 1892. Sighele himself drew attention to the fact that it was timely because of the widespread social unrest at the time. He drew his examples from the violence of peasants against tax collectors, from demonstrations of the unemployed in Rome, from the hunger riots which had taken place in Sicily five years before. He does not mention, but we may recall, that 1890 was the date of the first International May Day. It was a period of widespread militant activity by the working class, in Europe and America.

Sighele departed from the vewpoint of the Italian school of criminologists, who held that criminality was a recessive, hereditary trait, a form of atavism. He declared that crowds also were atavistic, swayed by primordial instincts rather than by intellectual considerations and the moralities of civilized life. Twenty years later, Sighele presided at the first congress of the Italian Nationalists, forerunners of fascism. He added a note of "science" to their arguments against parliamentary government, and joined in their glorification of war. If he had lived a few years longer, he would undoubtedly have welcomed fascism.

Sighele's theory was taken up and generalized further by the Frenchman LeBon, whose book is much better known. It is still one of the most widely read books in our public libraries, but those who read it are seldom aware of the background out of which it rises. LeBon has written many vicious attacks against socialism and trade-union activity generally, and his psychological theory of "the crowd" is designed to provide some semblance of scientific basis for these attacks. He explains the urgency of his book by writing:

> The masses are founding syndicates before which the authorities capitulate one after the other; they are also founding labor unions, which in spite of all economic laws tend to regulate the conditions of labor and wages. They return to the assemblies in which the government is vested, representatives utterly lacking initiative and independence, and reduced most often to nothing else than spokesmen of the committee that chose them.

His theory of the crowd is generalized to include all forms of economic and political cooperative activity on the part of the masses. Like Sighele, he too is an anti-parliamentarian. If LeBon had not ended a long life of anti-democratic ranting several years ago, he would undoubtedly be providing us now with some very entertaining observations on the people's front as well as the sit-down strikes, to which the French workers gave that envied Parisian touch.

Those who, at the present time, readily stigmatize such phenomena as sit-down strikes, or other working-class actions, as "crowd behavior," or "mental epidemics," are, I fear, actually responding to motivation very much like that of Sighele and LeBon. A serious scientific approach to these problems requires a real investigation of them, which involves a careful study of the individuals involved in the action, and not just a remote perspective of the "mass."

WHEN ONE investigates the history of particular sit-down strikes, one finds that the first question to answer is not "Why did they sit down?" but "Why didn't they strike before?" Despite low wages and bad conditions, workers have often hesitated to strike because they have been afraid. Above all, there is the perfectly rational fear of losing their jobs. This fear is allayed considerably by the sit-down technique. The worker who sits right on his job is not tormented by the hourly fear of losing it. In many of the sit-down strikes that have taken place, the workers have voted to strike on condition that the method used should be the sit-down, because they felt that, once out on the street, their chances of being fired were greatly increased. And the results of sit-down strikes have shown that this confidence in the method has been justified. I doubt that the worker's "love for his machine" enters very much into his preference at being inside rather than outside. A job is above all else a job, and that is what they are holding on to.

But, besides this, workers are held back from striking by many irrational fears of social criticism. For example, they do not want to be seen in an inferior position, or they do not want to be associated with a movement that has a bad reputation, etc. These fears also are met by the sit-down technique. The worker who sits down inside his shop does not feel that he has lost any social prestige.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the sit-down strike, from the psychological viewpoint, is the paradox that this seemingly more radical technique, which has been denounced as an invasion of property rights and a "revolutionary exercise," drew into strike actions for the very first time sections of the working class that had hitherto been regarded as "unorganizable." It was so in France, where the sales forces in the department stores and clerical workers in offices engaged in some of the most long-drawn-out struggles, and the union membership in these categories was literally multiplied tenfold in a very short period. It has been so in America, where the strikes of the Woolworth and Grand girls gave a stunning surprise both to their employers and to the working-class movement. These new recruits to militant unionism were not the victims of a "mental epidemic." Rather, they were released from something which previously restrained them. And, all legalism to the contrary notwithstanding, it seems much more genteel to sit down and fold your arms than to march up and down with a picket sign.

Interviews I have had with sit-down strikers have convinced me that irrational emotional factors, of the sort that are supposed to be responsible for "mental epidemics," play a much larger part in keeping workers back from striking than in leading them to strike. I came to a similar conclusion when, about a year ago, I made a study of personality factors in connection with political radicalism. The entry of the individual into such activity is likely to be the result of a struggle between intellectual conviction that favors participation and

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emotional inhibitions that restrain him from this unconventional step. That is one reason why Mr. Mellon should not take too much comfort from the thought that sit-downs may become less effective when they become "laughable." The good humor which has accompanied sit-down strikes is one of the factors that has made it easier for many hitherto unorganized workers to overcome these emotional inhibitions.

The experience of participation in any strike for the first time always profoundly affects the personality of the striker. The conditions of the sit-down strike are such that this effect is especially intense, because for some days or weeks the ordinary family routine is interrupted, and the individual lives among new companions, in an atmosphere of coöperativeness which is rare in contemporary society. As a result, a new orientation in thought is taken. "We" replaces "I," at first in thinking about the strike and its problems, but thereafter more generally. The new habit of thought invades, to lesser or greater degree, every segment of the individual's behavior, bringing everywhere a healthier, freer, less introvert orientation. This process too must be regarded primarily as a breaking-down of irrational individualistic inhibitions which had formerly impeded the proper objective approach to both personal and political social situations.

THE HESITATION of an unorganized worker to enter into public coöperation with his fellow-workers is only one expression of the introversion which, in greater or lesser degree, hampers most of us in our social activities. He does not judge this action merely in the light of the reasonable considerations, the common interest of those participating, the material benefits to be gained, the improved conditions sought, but also with regard to the way in which it exposes him, as an individual, to criticism. We have already mentioned the fact that the sit-down technique helps to overcome this inhibition. What I want to point out now is that the experience of participation in the strike generalizes this effect. The result, in the most striking cases, is a veritable revolution of the personality. These cases are referred to, usually, as persons in whom "latent abilities" have been revealed by the urgency of the strike situation. They are, in fact, persons whose abilities had hitherto been cramped and warped and are now suddenly released for free development.

I should like to add a few words about May Day. I think there are a great many people who can test the validity of my argument either out of their past experience or their present hesitations about marching in the May Day demonstration. How many of us feel the tug between intellectual convictions that we ought to march, to join with hundreds of thousands of others in demonstration of common purpose, and silly emotional inhibitions that try to hold us on the sidelines, just looking on! Are you afraid to submit to the infection of a "mental epidemic"? If you are nursing a protective capsule that insulates you from society, you owe it to yourself to step in line, and crack it!

Maurice Becker

May Day Parade

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The Sit-Down and How It Grew

In both theory and practice, the new tactic is seen as a natural outgrowth of mass-production technique

By George Morris

THE sit-down, labor's newest weapon, has caused a panic in the ranks of the open-shop employers. This accounts for the present outburst on the sacredness of "property rights." The "constitution-savers," whose tone has become quite familiar to the American people since the presidential election, are again on a crusade.

The very same people who for years refused to abide by the Wagner labor-relations act and similar legislation have hastened with arbitrary edicts banning the sit-down. Regarding the emergency as too serious to await formal passage of laws, governors of many states followed Governor Hoffman of New Jersey with announcements that sit-downs will not be tolerated. Now, with rock-ribbed Republican Vermont in the lead, state legislatures are preparing to rush through a ban on the sit-down.

In the whirl of arguments on the sit-down in Congress, state legislatures, and the press, many well-meaning people are undoubtedly carried away with the cry that the sit-down strike tactic is "illegal seizure," "forcible entry," and "trespass."

It may therefore be appropriate to swing away from "the perfume of the corporation lawyer to the taste of the factory," as Governor Benson of Minnesota said recently in a speech to his legislature, and see what is really behind the sit-down and how it operates. Are the sit-down strikers really out to change property relations—to take possession of plants?

THE SIT-DOWN is not an invention of some individual. It was born on the belt-line and shaped by the workers themselves, out of conditions that obtain in mass-production industries and company-controlled communities.

For years before the present sit-down wave began, automobile and rubber workers protested speed-up of the line and wage cuts by means of short sit-down stoppages. This is not an accident. It is the factories of these industries that were famous for their spy organizations, for the blacklisting and discharge of workers on the slightest suspicion that they favored labor organization. Workers in these factories remained unorganized until recently. The trade unions that had claimed jurisdiction among them were divided into dozens of craft organizations which by their impotency only antagonized the unorganized.

Two years ago, when I arrived in Detroit, I was surprised at the indifferent way workers spoke of sit-downs that had occurred. It was regarded as quite common, especially early in the production season, when production and piece rates for new parts were set. The "kick-back" from the workers was, in fact, to some degree a gauge for the management on what prices and speed could be set.

An automobile production line stretches for a city block or more. Hundreds of workers along the line perform certain details as the car part passes. Every worker is taught to understand that he is just one link in a vast mechanism. He is instructed to remember that the interrelation between the workers has been so carefully figured out by engineers that lagging, delay, or interruption anywhere along the line will throw the whole system out of gear.

Guards in uniform and spies in overalls are stationed at every turn in the factory to see that this delicately arranged apparatus moves in good order. Any unnatural move by a worker attracts a suspicious eye. In the interest of forestalling interruption of that very sensitive production line, the employers of such cities as Detroit, Flint, Pontiac, and Akron found it necessary to send human rats to trail the workers everywhere in the community.

These conditions made impossible the ordinary procedure in organizing, and forced the automobile and rubber workers to discover a new way to organize and to learn where the gigantic enterprises are most vulnerable. The sit-down was the consequence.

A sit-down stoppage can be initiated by several people along the line at a moment when the workers are aroused over a grievance. It must, of necessity, be a surprise move if it is to get by the spy machinery. From two or three points along the line, word is passed to the right and left that in a minute or two there will be a sit-down. The original source of that move is not known to anyone. But the whispers flash down the line and soon reach a sufficient number. Before you can say "Jack Robinson," the line is down. Workers stay idle at their places, unfinished parts pass them, the line is clogged, it is stopped, and no one works. This all happens in about a minute. The factory management is suddenly confronted with hundreds of idle workers.

Ben Yomen

There is no way of telling who started the whole business. The foreman rushes to this one and that one to shake out some information. But no one can really tell him who the initiators are. No one knows. But the stoppage is an accomplished fact, and if it isn't settled quickly, other divisions of the factory will be affected. Other workers may be involved, and if it lasts long it may mark the beginning of organization in the shop. Such stoppages are therefore quickly settled, as a rule, by announcement of a small concession. There were no negotiations. The live wires who initiated the stoppages remain hidden and unknown. There is no organization as a result of the stoppage. The line moves again and the banner of the open shop continues to fly over the factory.

Such was the type of stoppage employed for years when there was no union organization in the auto or rubber industries. But given a trade-union movement that sees a weapon in the sit-down, as the C.I.O. does, and given a more favorable political situation, as the defeat of Reaction last November has undoubtedly created, and you have the circumstances that brought about the present sit-down wave.

The type of sit-down we see today is merely an extension of the earlier sit-down stoppage. The workers are no longer satisfied with temporary concessions and to leave things as they were. They want more lasting gains and security. For that reason they stay in the factory as long as six and seven weeks, until they can walk out as free men and women with a collective-bargaining agreement and more substantial concessions. There is union leadership in the present sit-down. Most spontaneous sit-downs soon get the guidance of a union. So widespread has the sit-down become, so popular the technique because of its phenomenal success, that backward workers

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in out-of-the-way, unorganized mill towns have learned of the elementary rules for arranging it. From the sphere of the automobile and rubber industries, the sit-down technique is now being adapted with success to every type of factory and store.

The sit-down is now regarded as the initial step for freeing a factory for organization—for breaking the ice. The "seizure" fairy tale is made ridiculous by the very arrangements that workers make to administer affairs during the sit-down. Nothing happens that wouldn't happen in an ordinary walkout. The difference is merely that the employer is restrained from bringing in scabs to take jobs, and the workers inside the factory walls are protected against attacks by thugs. When Governor Frank Murphy of Michigan presented a written promise that he would keep the Chrysler plants closed with state police at the gates, for the duration of negotiations, the workers took his word for it and vacated the factories. They swept out the plants and, as the company admitted, left them in the best of order.

The basic idea behind the sit-down is that the workers are interested in the security of their jobs, but in the present social order their years of training are made part of the very gears and link-belts that move the production line.

William Allen White, a foremost observer for the top-hats, rightly admitted that the idea connected with the sit-down follows logically from the recognized right to picket. Given a right to sidewalks and highway in front of the factory, he says (New York *Times,* Sunday, March 28), the workers "suddenly crashed in the front door and sat down. . . . They passed the industrial threshold and began to picket inside the factory." The logic of this argument is that either the sit-down is as justified as picketing or picketing too should be banned.

As is quite apparent from the sit-downs we have seen, all principles that apply to a walkout still hold for the sit-down. A sit-down is seldom successful if only a minority of the workers support it. A minority may take initiative, but the still unorganized workers must at least favor the purpose. There have been cases when a poorly prepared sit-down gave the employer just the opportunity he was seeking to drive a wedge among the workers. Agents of the employer are sometimes set to precipitate unnecessary sit-downs so as to discredit the tactic among the unorganized or to antagonize many workers against the union. This was the case in several of the sit-downs in General Motors plants that followed the recent agreement.

The way the Hershey Chocolate Co. incited dairy farmers against sit-down strikers in its plants is only an example of how sit-down strikers cannot barricade themselves inside the plant and forget that the support of the middle-class people and farmers must be won.

It is remarkable how speedily sit-down strikers, though formerly unorganized, set up an administration in the factory. Department representatives form a leading council. Special committees are assigned for feeding arrangements, guard-duty, and policing of the plant, for entertainment and education, to serve as a trial board for violators of rules, etc.

The workers are divided to serve inside and outside, depending upon circumstances and how many may be needed to hold the factory. In the case of large plants, the workers determine which is the key department and concentrate their forces there.

In almost every sit-down, rules posted by the strike committee have restricted smoking to certain rooms, banned alcoholic liquors, and warned against damage to company property, gambling, quarreling, or any such disorder. Those in charge of policing the factory say that discipline was enforced. Where men and women are involved, separate sleeping quarters are arranged and a matron is often placed in charge of the women's "dormitory."

The chairman of the strike committee, the connecting link with the outside, reports at daily meetings. An outside strike committee arranges a kitchen where meals are prepared for the insiders, provides cots, organizes picket lines, and carries on in the orthodox "walkout fashion."

Inside the plant, the workers are largely occupied with ways to kill the monotony. They play cards, checkers, chess, ping-pong, pitch quoits, box, play ball in the yard, practise on musical instruments, sing, compose songs, write jingles, do a hundred other things.

Much of the time is spent in educating the new recruits to unionism through daily lectures, study groups, and reading of labor literature. Short plays, and skits by workers' theater groups or by talent from the ranks of the strikers, an improvised orchestra, vaudeville, etc., furnish much of the entertainment.

The sit-down is by no means as uncomfortable as many believe. Arrangements are often possible so that workers get passes to visit their homes. Relatives are frequently permitted to visit the plant. In cold weather, the advantages of staying inside are quite apparent.

Defense of the plant is a serious matter. Threats to eject them or to incite strikebreakers force the workers to lock all entrances and barricade themselves. During the General Motors sit-down, fire hose was used for defense and automobile bodies were piled to block passage-ways. On a number of occasions when sheriffs attacked, the workers were forced to defend themselves by every means at hand. But on the whole, considering the hundreds of thousands of workers that were involved in the recent sit-downs, there was very little violence, and few arrests as compared to major walkouts.

The sit-down is a more effective way to tie up a factory, and forces an earlier settlement; unorganized workers have more confidence in it because they do not leave their jobs; violence is reduced because the workers are protected; it makes easier the striking of gigantic plants which are difficult to picket; the usefulness of strikebreakers is reduced; the sit-down can be sprung suddenly and is therefore a means of holding the employers to an agreement; the employer is unable at the outset to distinguish between strikers and potential strikebreakers—at least not until the union has had an opportunity to organize.

It is quite clear: the reason some folks are worried about the constitution is because labor has discovered a battering ram with which it is successfully smashing one after another of the traditional open-shop fortresses.

"This is probably the last time I'll need you fellows. I'm reading up on how to make friends and influence people."

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Is the Sit-Down Legal?

A well-known labor lawyer discusses the "property-rights" angle, and remarks that law cannot contravene popular will

By Maurice Sugar

LET us picture a street in the working-class neighborhood of a typical industrial city. It is night. In the shadows may be seen figures of men quietly and cautiously entering a worker's home. Singly they file into the basement. It is pitch dark. All is quiet. Then a voice is heard in the darkness. It is the voice of a worker calling the meeting to order. It is a meeting of workers, employees of General Motors, let us say, to discuss plans for building their union, the United Automobile Workers of America. The meeting over, they file out in the darkness. None is able to identify another by sight.

This happened scores of times in the city of Flint, Mich., within the past year. Why was it necessary for these workers to meet in this manner? Because they had learned that the General Motors Corp. employed hundreds of spies to report upon their activities, and that once the corporation discovered that they were active in organizing a union they would be discharged and, with their wives and children, subjected to suffering and privation.

Members of the United Automobile Workers employed in the Ford plant meet in the basements of their homes in small groups of four to eight. Why do they do this? They do it because they are compelled to do it in order to prevent wholesale disclosure by Ford stool-pigeons, and the resulting loss of their jobs.

The Ford private police have searched the lockers used by workers, have gone through their coat pockets, opened their lunch boxes, and even peered between the slices of bread of their sandwiches, searching for union literature.

The Ford Motor Co. has taken movies of a parade of workers, scrutinized the film, and discharged employees whom they identified as on their staff. A foreman in the Ford plant was discharged because he was seen to have shaken hands with me at his father's funeral. This is the "independence" of the workers which Henry Ford fears would be destroyed by unions!

The industries of this nation are literally riddled with spies and stool-pigeons. The Fisher Body plant in Lansing, Mich., was at one time completely unionized. Spies worked their way into the officialdom of the union. In due time all of the officers were spies; and in due time the entire membership of the union consisted of these officers only. As the result of espionage among the auto workers in Flint, in less than two years the membership of the local dropped from twenty-six thousand to one hundred and sixty-two.

The president of the Plymouth Motor Car Co. local of the United Automobile Workers has just been revealed as a Chrysler spy. Four months ago, while he was president, the local union consisted of sixty members. Within three months after his removal, the membership went to ten thousand.

Labor espionage is outlawed by the National Labor Relations Act. Even were it not illegal, can there be any doubt that this practice is vicious and reprehensible in the eyes of the entire people of the United States?

The corporations make use of political weapons, too, in order to prevent the organization of workers into unions. Recently, in the city of Dearborn, the Common Council, which does the Ford Motor Co.'s bidding, passed an ordinance designed to prevent the distribution of handbills among Ford employees. Under this ordinance, one is prohibited from distributing handbills unless he has paid a fee and procured a license. Look at a section of this ordinance: "No license shall be issued for the distribution of any circular (or) handbill . . . that contains obscene, immoral, scandalous, libelous, or treasonable statements, or any statement the truth of which cannot be established to the satisfaction of the City Clerk." The City Clerk of Dearborn refused a license for the issuance of a leaflet which referred to the speed-up at the Ford Plant as the "murderous speed-up." I am not sure whether the ground for the refusal was obscenity, immorality, libel, or treason. It was probably treason.

AND NOW a great tidal wave of organization is sweeping the country. The workers have found a weapon which brings to them the possibility of procuring parity of power with their corporation employers. The urge which has been dammed up in the breasts of these workers has found release. One year ago, the membership of the United Automobile Workers in the city of Detroit was ten thousand. Today that membership is one hundred and seventy-five thousand. One year ago, the membership throughout the country was thirty thousand. Today it is three hundred thousand. And there are people who say that the sit-down strike is not justified! Such people, consciously or unconsciously, are accepting the ethical standards of the "economic royalists" of the country.

During a strike some three years ago, I participated in "negotiations" with Mr. Edward Fisher, of the Fisher Body Co., and his associates. The "negotiations" consisted of Mr. Fisher reading the union demands out loud, and at the conclusion of each stating, "The answer to that, gentlemen, is 'No.'" One of the workers pointed out to Mr. Fisher that he could grant the increased wage by the mere addition of two and one-half cents to the price of each car. Mr. Fisher's reply was that nobody was going to tell him how he should run his business. He was right—then. But running through my mind at that time was the thought that the time would come when the workers in that plant would be telling him just a little about how that plant should be run in relation to their wages, hours, and conditions of employment. The time has come. And while I find myself incapable of harboring a feeling of revenge, I am frank to state that lately I have been feeling mighty good.

When in spite of the spy system, the blacklist, the terror, and the company union the worker succeeds in building his union, the employer further violates the law by refusing to talk to him. What a terrible thing the worker does then. He says, "So you won't talk, eh?" —and he sits down!

That the sit-down strike is ethical follows both from its origin and its application. I might well content myself with arguing that what is ethical should be recognized as legal —and, in my opinion, such a position would be sound. But let us turn for a moment to another approach to the problem under discussion.

There was a time, during the period of industrial expansion, when a worker discharged from one job could more or less readily get another. That time is past. In this day of gigantic industrial monopolies, with our great army of unemployed, the worker has come to know that the loss of his particular job, or the loss of a job with a particular employer, may spell destitution. This explains the development of an "attachment" which the worker feels to his particular employment, or his particular employer.

Now let us see if there is not a logical basis for the claim which the worker makes that he has a right in his job. We start by asserting that every worker in America has the right to live in decency and as a free man. I cannot believe that anyone will dispute this. Since the worker has the right to live in decency and as a free man, and since his livelihood and his freedom actually depend upon his having a job, it follows that he has the right to a job. Indeed, the right to work has been expressly recognized as a property right by our highest courts. Having the right to live decently and as a free man, and having the right to work, it logically follows that he has a right to work for decent wages, for decent

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hours, and under decent conditions. And since, under the existing economy, it is impossible for him to move freely from one job to another, it logically follows that he has the right to work at the particular job at which he is employed, or at least for his particular employer, with decent wages, hours, and conditions.

Having this right, there is necessarily a correlative duty on the part of the employer so to use his property that the worker may enjoy that right, and to refrain from any practices which will in any way infringe upon that right. Certainly the worker thinks so.

"Rights" do not exist in a political or economic vacuum. And no man can assert a right without at the same time asserting it *against* another man. The rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness referred to in our Declaration of Independence sprang out of the denial of those rights by others. The rights of freedom of speech, press, assembly, worship, became and are rights only because there have been and are attempts at their denial. If we assume, as I insist we must assume, that everyone has the right to security and a decent living, it follows that such right is being asserted by the worker against those who would deny him that security and that decent living.

And so we have a conflict of asserted rights. On the one hand, we have the asserted right of the worker to live, with the accompanying rights which I have indicated. On the other hand, we have the asserted right of the employer to do with his property as he pleases. And when these rights conflict, we have no choice but to take a position favoring the domination of one right over the other, to a degree at least.

The people of America have been gradually taking a position on this conflict. When Congress passed the National Industrial Recovery Act with its Section 7-a presuming to outlaw discrimination against workers, it recognized to a degree the right of the worker to his job. It recognized this right in the Railway Labor Act and in the Wagner Labor Act. This means, certainly, that the worker has the right to that job to the degree, at least, that he cannot be deprived of it by way of discrimination. Similarly, the right of the worker to collective bargaining involves a recognition of a limitation upon the employer in dealing with the worker in relation to his job. And when the Supreme Court of the United States recently held constitutional the provisions of the Railway Labor Act and Wagner Labor Act, guaranteeing collective bargaining and legalizing the majority rule for such bargaining, it then, whatever may have impelled the decision, recognized a right of the worker in his job.

Now, when the worker engages in a sit-down strike, he sits down on his job. Is this an encroachment upon the property rights of the employer? Of course it is. But encroachments upon property rights are not *ipso facto* illegal. The law books abound with adjudications which justify encroachments upon property rights. This is what we lawyers call *damnum absque injuria.*

Let us illustrate. The right to strike is a right asserted against the employer, and a strike obviously works an injury to the employer's property. While it is true that in the past this right usually has been attended by departure from the plant, it is clear that this distinction has no application to the problem we are now discussing. If the employer has the absolute right to run his business without *any* interference on the part of labor, he certainly has the right to run it free from interference by labor outside of his plant as well as inside. The same applies to the right to picket. Picketing certainly is an encroachment upon the property rights of the employer. Indeed, in one sense that is its main purpose.

We see, then, that as the law stands today, it is generally recognized that labor has a right to pursue practices which clearly are encroachments upon the property rights of the employer and which, indeed, may even result in the total loss of the employer's property.

So, to press for a distinction based upon whether the encroachment upon the employer's property rights is effected from the outside or the inside of the plant is only to argue about the degree to which labor should be recognized as having its claimed rights. And I say that under existing conditions, the recognition of labor's right to sit-down in the plant is a recognition of labor's need for the possession of a weapon to protect itself against the tremendous economic and political power of the corporate interests of the country. Labor must have this weapon for use against the employer who continues to say, "My property, may it always be my right to use it as I please; but right or wrong, my property."

A review of the recent series of sit-down strikes throughout the country proves one thing clearly: the sit-down strike tends to eliminate violence. The use of thugs, finks, hired strike-breakers, and bribed workers is made exceedingly difficult. The sit-down strike is labor's weapon of economic self-defense. And I know of no case in which labor has used more force than was necessary to defend itself when attacked.

THE AMERICAN WORKER is breaking his chains. The employer who has forced them would argue with the man in chains about the ethics of the chaining. He brings hoary precedents—and some not so hoary—to prove that ethics and law require that the chains should not be disturbed. And he may think that he is winning the argument, too. But the worker in chains, finding that he has been unable to free himself by argument, breaks the chains. Then the employer protests loudly and indignantly that his chain law has been violated. But it has not been violated. Actually, whether we know it or not, the chain law has fallen with the chains.

The sit-down strike is legal to millions of workers. It will remain legal to them, and to more millions as time goes on. And who dare say that millions of American workers have suddenly become criminals? Edmund Burke once said, "I do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people." May I presume to add that he who would indict a whole people is himself the criminal?

Law cannot enslave a people in perpetuity. Law should function for the people and not against them. And we should constantly remind ourselves that, as Burke says, "People crushed by law have no hopes but from power. If laws are their enemies they will be enemies to the laws."

We are told that the workers have no respect for the courts. Who tells us this? The fifty-three Liberty League lawyers who announced that the Wagner Labor Act was unconstitutional, and deliberately encouraged its

The Sign

Very early, before spring, a plane
intoning cruised the upland of rare heaven,
while miles below, we ran in a Sunday park, where
boys passed yelping in sharp elastic air.

But if, leaning ourselves on the moist stone
by flaring wind and shadow faced and flanked,
I should turn from you the path of my hand again—

It is since I must, must with the whirring lane
of limousines clean as jewels, the soiled beds compare
of wives who await the pimp's touch on the stair;
and the face of tenements hung with escapes like chain.

Then even in you, serene girl, I see only the companior
of a sanguine future, distant, tense, and distinct
as our monoplane veering still to the glass sun.

DAVID WOLFF.

★ ★ ★

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violation. They are not seeking respect, they are seeking submission. Respect cannot be forced, it must be earned. Respect springs from free men; submission comes from slaves. If the courts of America are to command the respect of the American people, they must be such courts as the American people will respect.

Remember: that which hinders a people in their struggle for freedom—that is immoral. That which becomes a necessity to a people in their struggle for freedom—that is moral. And that which is moral certainly should be recognized as legal.

They tell us that if the sit-down strike is recognized as legal, our constitution will be gone. They forget that in February, 1935, Mr. Justice McReynolds of the United States Supreme Court said, in the minority opinion in the Gold Clause case, "The Constitution is gone." So it is gone anyway. Why worry about it now?

I suppose no one knows better than a lawyer whose life has been devoted to the labor movement that it is no easy matter to bring about the acceptance of labor's point of view by the judiciary. It is difficult because we live in a society in which our ideas are molded largely by the agencies dominated by the employing class. It is especially true in the field of law that, as a great thinker once said, "The tradition of all past generations weighs like an Alp upon the brain of the living."

But there is evolution in the law, as in all things. There *was* a time when the strike itself was illegal. The first case on the right of workmen to strike was tried in England in 1721. The journeymen tailors of Cambridge went on strike. They were indicted for conspiring to raise their wages. They were found guilty. Here is the reasoning of the court:

> It is not for the refusing to work but for the conspiring that they are indicted, and a conspiracy of any kind is illegal although the matter about which they conspired might have been lawful for them to do, if they had not conspired to do it.

That is what I would call a juicy judicial gem.

The first case in this country was tried in 1806. The boot and shoemakers of Philadelphia were indicted for "conspiring to raise their wages." The judge said:

> A combination of workmen to raise their wages may be considered in a twofold point of view: one is to benefit themselves, the other is to injure those who do not join their society. The rule of law condemns both.

And then he said this:

> If the rule be clear, we are bound to conform to it, even though we do not comprehend the principles upon which it is founded. We are not to reject it because we do not see the reason of it.

Now, *you* ask the American people to "respect" that kind of a decision!

There was a time when peaceful picketing was held illegal by most of the courts of the country. Today it is generally held legal.

Just as the strike, once held illegal, is now held legal, and just as picketing, once held illegal, is now generally held legal, so should the sit-down, now being held illegal, come to be held legal. Courts are agonizingly slow to change, but they *can* change. This is shown by the recent decision of the United States Supreme Court upholding the Washington minimum-wage law and over-ruling its earlier decision. Note well a reason given for the change. I quote from the opinion:

> The exploitation of a class of workers who are in an unequal position with respect to bargaining power and are thus relatively defenseless against the denial of a living wage is not only detrimental to their health and well being but casts a direct burden for their support upon the community.

The opinion refers to this as "economic conditions which have supervened" and as a "compelling consideration which recent economic experience has brought into a strong light."

We are told that if labor does not like the law, it ought to cause the law to be changed. The answer is that labor has already caused the law to be changed. Now we await only the acceptance by the courts of the change which has already been made.

We members of the bar, traditionally conservative, must break out of our mental straitjackets. I know it is not easy. I have tried to liberate a number of judges in sit-down injunction cases. The results have been uniform —failure. I have urged upon them the application of the doctrine of unclean hands. But their minds have been completely closed. Judges with no mean local reputations as "legal minds" simply do not hear you when you argue. So shocked are they by the mere thought of the employer being temporarily deprived of his property that their decisions are irrevocably made before you even enter the court-room, let alone begin to argue. Indeed, in some cases I have observed that the very books from which the judges have later quoted to support their decisions were lying on their desks before I had commenced my argument.

Bear in mind, fellow lawyers, the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court:

> The life of the law has not been logic, it has been experience. The felt necessities of the time, the prevalent moral and political theories, intuitions of public policy avowed or unconscious, even the prejudices which judges share with their fellowmen, have had a good deal more to do than the syllogism in determining the rules by which men should be governed.

The situation of counsel for the workers would indeed be discouraging were it not for his knowledge that, outside of the court-room, irresistible economic and social forces, impelled by great masses of the American people, are breaking through the barriers erected by the big business interests of the country. These same forces must shatter the conservatism of the judiciary and, by their impact, ultimately compel recognition of the sit-down strike as legal.

However difficult our task may be, those of us in the legal profession who have some understanding of the powerful forces at work in our society, those of us who are determined that the fascists in our midst shall not impose their damnable regime upon the American people, we who have a vision of an American people truly liberated and truly happy, those of us who agree with Lincoln when he said, "The people are the rightful masters of the courts"—we must have courage in times like these. We must continue to pound away, insisting, as Lincoln insisted, that "this country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it."

"This is my favorite hobby." Jack Walters

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What Do You Mean, Housing?

New Deal measures and pending legislation are analyzed in terms of their real utility

By Sidney Hill

THE present Congress has before it a number of housing bills. Much speculation is going on, particularly among housing experts, or "housers," as they are beginning to call themselves, concerning the fate of the most important of these measures, namely, the Wagner-Steagall bill and the Scott bill. In this article, we intend to analyze these bills on the basis of our discussion two weeks ago. But before we go on to discuss specific housing programs and legislation, it will be of value to glance at several of the general aspects of the question.

It is a commentary on the limited political and economic understanding of the average "houser" that he tends to weigh all social problems in terms of slum clearing and housing. For example, the New York City Housing Authority, in a recent publication, states:

> Housing is one of the many ways in which to forestall the bitter lessons which history has in store for us if we continue to be blind and stiffnecked. As I see it, it is a question of housing—or else. Housing or else increased squalor; housing or else a mounting crime and insanity rate; housing or else disease, blighted and wasted lives. The problem is so pressing no one dare ignore it.

According to this organization, which is a well-known advocate of slum clearance and low-rent dwellings, our fate hangs in the housing balance. Leave the slums alone and anything (do they mean revolution?) might happen. Demolish the slums and build new homes, and you eliminate or ameliorate the social evils.

The fallacy in the Housing Authority's premise will become evident upon reviewing briefly our previous article. We observed, from actual experiences in England and elsewhere, that slum clearance and the construction of new dwellings do not by themselves bring better health, less crime, and brighter lives to the poor. The reason for this is that the evils in question extend their roots into the very fabric of our social and economic system. Housing is only one aspect of a problem which includes such inter-related factors as poverty, social and family maladjustments, and insecurity. The danger of the slum-breeds-disease-and-crime theory is that it tends to obscure the real cause of illness and crime. Moreover, we saw that under the stress of their wretched living conditions and under the influence of false theories, the workers of England, Austria, Germany, and other European countries accepted slum clearance and housing schemes which in reality failed to benefit them. In most cases, the new houses which replaced the slums were occupied by middle-income groups, the former slum dwellers merely being dumped into neighboring slums. The few low-income families who were actually re-housed by these schemes frequently found themselves worse off than they were before, because the higher rents in the new houses left less money for food, clothing, medical attention, and other necessities. Similar experiences are even now occurring in the United States.

We do not argue from these disillusioning experiences of the past that it is dangerous for the people to support a slum clearance and low-rent housing program. After all, the slums in which one third of the population is forced to live should be abolished, even if they do not breed disease and crime. The value of a clear understanding of European housing history is that it helps us in formulating our own housing program, a program which is closely related to the political and economic demands of the labor movement and which really provides housing for the low-income groups at rents they can safely pay.

ANY CONSIDERATION of current housing proposals in this country must begin with the New Deal administration. When Roosevelt took office early in 1933, the United States was on the brink of economic collapse. As unemployment increased and private industry proved unable to cope with the situation, the idea of a federal public works program, with housing as a major part, suggested itself to the administration as the solution best calculated under the circumstances to satisfy all interests. In one of his famous radio talks, the President told his audience that he sought "the security of the men, women, and children of the country." "That security," he said, "involves added means of providing better homes for the people of the nation." In other words, the building of homes under the New Deal was to be more than a kindly gesture to the poorly housed slum dwellers; this time it was to be an important part of the recovery program itself.

We know today that since 1933, there has been considerable "pump priming" through public works, but practically no public housing. Only about twenty thousand families will be accommodated by federal housing projects in the United States after four years. This must seem astonishing to the average person. New Deal surveys showed that one third of all our dwellings were unfit to live in, that the construction industry was flat on its back, and that millions of workers in the home-building field were unemployed. Nevertheless, while billions were spent on the construction of roads, dams, and other P.W.A. projects, less than one hundred million dollars were expended on housing for the low-income groups.[1]

The administration was not nearly so stingy with the owners of real estate and with the mortgage institutions. Few people realize that during the same period in which public housing was suffering one set-back after another, the real-estate interests of the country received the handsome gift of some five billion dollars, through the Home Owners' Loan Corp. and the Federal Farm Mortgage Corp.

The H.O.L.C. was created in 1933 "to save the distressed urban home owner whose home is mortgaged from losing it through foreclosure." The H.O.L.C. relieves the distressed home owner in the following manner: first, it gives the mortgage holder (the bank) its good 4-percent negotiable bonds in exchange for the defaulted mortgage. This old mortgage is then replaced by a new one, the net result of which is that the home owner is now indebted to the H.O.L.C. instead of the bank.

John Fahey, president of the H.O.L.C., reports that about three billion dollars have been paid out to take over the mortgages of nearly one million small homes, and that "more than 90 percent of this money has gone to the commercial banks, savings banks, insurance companies, building and loan associations and mortgage companies, and has had the effect of strengthening their resources in a very important way."

Frank Davidson

With homes being foreclosed at the rate of a thousand a day after the great crash, the government eased the bankers out of a tight spot by taking over their sour mortgages. In exchange, it gave them good, interest-bearing, negotiable bonds. As for the miserable home owner, he is no better off than he was before. It is true, of course, that foreclosure was temporarily delayed, but he finds it just as difficult to meet H.O.L.C. payments as he did the payments to the bank. The proof of this is

[1] See *Housing Under Capitalism*, by Sidney Hill, International Pamphlet No. 46, for more detailed discussion.

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contained in the latest H.O.L.C. publicity releases, which indicate that by the end of the year, the government will have foreclosed 106,000 mortgages.

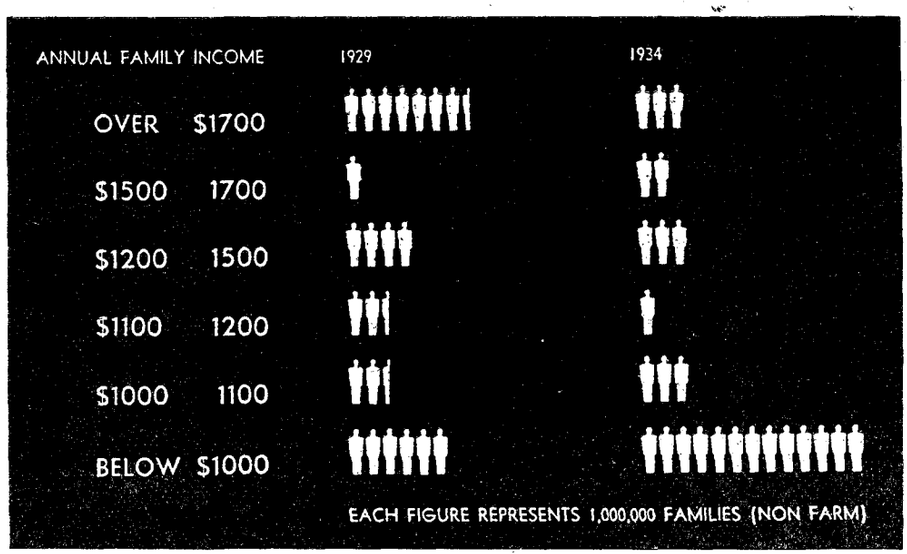
Another active New Deal agency is the Federal Farm Mortgage Corp. This corporation was organized to do for the distressed farmer what the H.O.L.C. accomplished for his urban brother. Consequently, it is almost unnecessary to add that the $2,000,000,000 fund with which it was provided went to bail out the institutions holding defaulted farm mortgages. In theory, of course, the F.F.M.C. was going to aid the unfortunate small farmer. In practice, however, it again happened that the banks and the mortgage companies were "refinanced" out of a tight spot, and the government became the largest farm-mortgage holder in the country.

What has all this to do with slum clearance and low-rent housing? A little figuring will show that today the U. S. government holds a lien on almost two million American homes. In other words, the government itself has become the greatest real-estate interest in the country. Consequently, it is extremely reluctant to disturb the realty market and endanger its huge mortgage investment with a large public-housing program. Why should Uncle Sam compete with himself and his fellow mortgagees, the bankers, the insurance companies, and the lending institutions?

There are, of course, other reasons for the failure of an adequate housing program to take hold in our country. There is, for example, the lack of militant support by the great labor unions and the public at large, and there is the determined opposition on the part of reactionary groups to any progressive public undertaking, including housing. But enough of the problem has been outlined thus far in these articles to give us a good idea of what a comprehensive slum clearance and low-rent housing program is up against. We can at least begin to see our opponents.

THE PROVISION of decent homes for the masses of the population today, as in the past, revolves around the question of government subsidy. It is generally admitted that private enterprise has not been able to build new dwellings for the low-income families. The simple fact is that these families cannot pay enough in rent to interest the private builder, who, under our system, must be able to make a profit on his investment. If the slum dweller is to be adequately rehoused, the difference between what he can pay and the cost of the housing must be made up by the government.

The Brookings Institution has estimated that in 1929 almost half of all American families had an annual income under $1500. By 1934, three-quarters of all families had incomes under this figure. According to the "minimum decency budget" studies of the Department of Agriculture, a family with an annual income of $1500 can afford to spend only twenty dollars per month on rent, or about five dollars per room. Most families, of course, can safely pay even less than this for rent. On the basis of normal market conditions in the home-building field, the rental of a newly constructed room ranges from twelve to twenty dollars per month. Limited-dividend projects, such as the Knickerbocker Village and Hillside projects in New York, with government loans at four percent and profit limited to six percent, have been able to rent at from ten to twelve dollars per room. Recent P.W.A. projects with a 30 percent outright subsidy from the government, a low interest rate, and tax exemption are able to rent at about seven dollars per room per month. We see, therefore, that to date none of these methods has touched the needs of that half of our families who today live in the slums.



This chart shows that in 1934 there were 20 million urban families, or 80 percent of the total, who had annual incomes of $1500 or less (1929 incomes have been adjusted to 1934). The most these families can afford to pay for rent is $5 per room per month. Many cannot even pay that. Any public housing which involves a rental rate higher than $5 will not benefit the overwhelming majority of the people.

THE HOUSING ISSUES of the moment are reflected in two bills now before Congress: the Wagner-Steagall bill and the Scott bill. Both measures involve the use of generous government subsidies, and both pretend to be an approach to a solution for those for whom adequate housing is otherwise not available. The Wagner-Steagall bill proposes to set up a permanent U. S. Housing Authority to include all present emergency federal housing agencies. With the exception of a few "demonstration" projects, most of the housing under this bill would be carried out by local authorities and "limited-profit agencies" to whom the Authority would supply the funds. The Authority would have at its disposal $1,000,000,000 over a period of four years, or enough to build about three hundred thousand dwelling units, accommodating one family each, in that time. This fund, which is to be raised through the issuance of bonds guaranteed by the U. S., may be advanced to the local housing authorities only in the form of loans payable within sixty years.

In addition to the above, the Wagner-Steagall Bill provides for an appropriation of $50,000,000. This sum may be paid out in regular annual grants or subsidies to local authorities for the purpose of keeping the rents low. The annual payment which the U. S. Housing Authority agrees to make to each project will be sufficient, according to Senator Wagner, to bring the rents down to about six dollars per room per month.

It is apparent from this brief summary that the Wagner-Steagall bill is a progressive measure. It provides for a permanent federal housing agency independent of the temporary relief set-ups, and it makes possible a low rental.

This bill, however, contains several very serious deficiencies. In the first place, the quantity of construction is inadequate. It provides for only three hundred thousand dwelling units in four years as compared with the ten million units which is commonly accepted as the immediate need for families of low income. Moreover, it is not made mandatory in the bill that all of the three hundred thousand units be constructed. In the second place, there is no guarantee that a really low rental will be realized in practice. The six-dollar rate is theoretically possible under the bill, but, since there is no specific maximum rental established, the U. S. Housing Authority could easily set a higher rate. The all-important term "families of low income" is defined in the bill as "families who cannot afford to pay enough to cause private enterprise in their locality to build an adequate supply of decent, safe, and sanitary dwellings for their use." This definition is unsatisfactory, because, in the hands of a reactionary Authority, it lends itself to grave abuse.

Finally, the U. S. Housing Authority is given entirely too much discretion. The board of directors of the Authority is to be composed of three members appointed by the President. Suppose these directors turn out to be persons like Peter Grimm, reactionary New York real-estate man, who was called

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upon by the President to "coördinate" federal housing agencies in 1936. Under the Wagner bill, the Authority, if it wished, could (1) refrain from building even the small quantity of housing provided, and (2) establish a rental rate which would be out of the reach of the low-income families for whom the bill was designed. The reader will notice that it is precisely in these connections that previous housing schemes have proven disillusioning.

The housing bill introduced by Congressman Byron N. Scott of California is strong where the Wagner Bill is weak. The Scott bill[2] provides for the construction of not less than ten million dwelling units within ten years. In its first four years, the Scott bill would provide ten times as many dwellings as the Wagner Bill. This construction is *mandatory* under the bill and is not left to the discretion of a board of directors.

The Scott bill establishes a maximum rental of five dollars *or less* per room per month. Occupancy is limited to those whose annual income does not exceed $1000 for a family of two, plus $250 for each dependent. In other words, a family of four would be limited to $1500 per year.

A housing fund of $1,000,000,000 for the first year is to be appropriated out of the Treasury and replenished annually, on the basis of estimates of need by the U. S. Housing Authority. Under the Scott bill, the entire original cost of a project is put up by the government in the form of an outright grant—85 percent by the U. S. Housing Authority and 15 percent by the local agency. Consequently, the rental charge is based only on the cost of operating the project, plus a payment in lieu of local taxes, but in no case may the rent exceed five dollars per room per month. In New York City, where it costs about four dollars to maintain a room per month (including heat, hot water, and other services), there would be one dollar per room per month available for municipal charges. If the city granted complete tax exemption, the rental could be four dollars. In other parts of the country, the rental could be even less.

IF THE QUESTION before us were merely one of making a choice between the two bills, the answer would be easy. It is perfectly obvious that the Scott bill is the only one which really begins to fill the great need which exists for decent housing for over one half of the families of the U. S. The Scott bill, moreover, squarely faces the hard fact that these families cannot afford to pay more than five dollars per room per month without sacrifices of food and other necessities.

However, there are other practical considerations which present themselves. Of the two, the Wagner-Steagall bill is the only one with even a remote chance of passage in this session of Congress. Furthermore, the Wagner-Steagall bill, with all its defects, remains a forward-looking measure. It establishes the principle of publicly subsidized housing, and it makes possible a low rental, although it doesn't guarantee it. This explains why Senator Wagner's bill has already aroused the opposition of real-estate and other reactionary interests. These interests, as we indicated earlier in this article, have succeeded in obstructing the public housing movement for a long time. They prevented the passage of the Wagner-Ellenbogen housing bill in 1936, and this year they seem to have won the ear of the President again. As a result, the present bill has been lying in committee for two months, and now there are whispers that the President is bent on curtailing further "pump-priming" public construction, including housing. The bill will continue to remain in a Congressional pigeon-hole unless the millions of wretchedly housed city and rural workers assert themselves.

Gene

It is the duty of all persons genuinely interested in low-rental public housing to support the Wagner-Steagall bill and force its passage at this session of Congress. At the same time, it will be necessary to point out the deficiencies in this bill and to attempt to bring it up to the standard set by the Scott bill. Practically speaking, this means (1) that the Wagner bill should be given a larger appropriation and that the construction of a really sufficient quantity of housing should be made mandatory; and (2) that a maximum rental of not more than five dollars per room per month should be established if we wish to avoid the unfortunate experiences of previous housing schemes.

The most important point, however, is that the support of a housing program must be intimately related to the other phases of the movement for better living conditions. It must be related to the fight for more adequate relief, because there are millions of families who cannot even pay the five dollars rental. It must be related to the struggles for higher wages and unemployment insurance, so that the families who may be housed under the program will be assured of a sufficient supply of food, clothing, and other necessities. The Stockton-on-Tees experience, which we discussed in last week's article, must not be repeated here. And finally, a housing program must be related to a progressive and comprehensive political movement which can enforce the letter of the legislation and prevent the historical abuses which, our study shows, have been put over in the past in the name of slum clearance and workers' housing.

A DISCUSSION of housing would not be complete without a word on the present problems of the slum dwellers. After all, even if the Wagner-Steagall bill should be made into law, there would be a gap of a year or more before the first dwellings could be built. In New York City, for example, the Wagner bill as now formulated would provide dwellings for about fifty thousand families in four years. But according to Langdon Post, Tenement Housing Commissioner, there are now five hundred thousand families living in "old-law" tenements, most of which are firetraps. Since 1901, over one thousand five hundred men, women, and children have been burned to death in New York's tenements, and each year fifty more are added to this terrible list.

The millions of American families who are forced by poverty to live in the slums cannot depend only on Washington for a solution to their problems. Legislation seeking to clear blighted areas and build new homes is important and must be supported by all socially minded people. In the meantime, however, there is a great deal which can be done to make the existing slum dwellings safer and more habitable. As a result, tenant organizations throughout the country have developed around a two-fold program: (1) long-range slum clearance and housing, and (2) enforcement and liberalization of laws relating to the improvement of the existing slums.

To many, this may seem a contradiction. "Why patch up and thereby perpetuate the rotten slums?" they ask. "Let us tear them down and build decent dwellings in their place." It would, of course, be ideal to be able to do that, and in the Soviet Union the elimination of sub-standard housing is proceeding on a huge scale. In our own country, however, slum clearance and public housing have been beset by many difficulties. An example of a realistic approach to the question is the program of the New York City-Wide Tenants' Council, which is composed of affiliated tenants' unions. This organization is interested in national legislation such as the Wagner-Steagall bill and the Scott bill. But its activities are centered on the enforcement of local laws covering the safeguarding and improving of existing tenements and the prevention of rent increases. Rent strikes, demonstrations, and legislative pressure have proven to be effective instruments in this movement.

[2] The Scott housing bill (HR4292) was formulated by the Inter-Professional Association, in collaboration with the Federation of Architects, Engineers, Chemists, & Technicians, and Congressman Scott.

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For a National Writers' Congress

Twenty-three well-known authors point to the world situation, and ask action

A Manifesto and a Call

TODAY in America there are signs of a literary revival that may resemble or surpass that of the period from 1912 to 1916—the period of the "poetry renaissance" and the "revolt against the genteel tradition." Those of us who remember the hopeful activity of those years can also remember how it was cut short by the War. And we can see that the promise of the 1930's is threatened in a still more definite fashion.

The fascist powers are trying to impose their system on the rest of Europe and ultimately on the world. Japan, Germany, and Italy are at war without having declared war. After the opening skirmishes in Manchuria and Ethiopia, Spain is the first real battlefield in a civil and international conflict that is certain to recur elsewhere. If the fascists are allowed to win in Spain, then France or Czechoslovakia or the Soviet Union is likely to suffer the next attack. It is hard to see how the United States can keep out of the war once it begins on a world scale.

And there is vastly more at stake, even for writers, than a mere literary revival. Spain is showing us—or rather Mussolini and Hitler and Franco are showing us in Spain—that art galleries, libraries, museums, archives, research laboratories, all the monuments and tools of culture, are subject to destruction along with their staffs of scholars and scientists and the living public for which they exist.

In our own country, fascism is still afraid to wear a uniform. Against it there has been an impressive rallying of the forces that favor democracy. American labor—the strongest of these forces—is organizing itself for what is really the first time. And this rebirth of the American labor movement is connected with the new stirrings in literature—not as cause and effect, but rather as two parallel manifestations of the same progressive forces.

But the growth of the labor movement is being and will be resisted. The bankers and industrialists will fight to keep their control of American life. They will get help from the courts, they will call out the militia, they will have the newspapers to help them in molding public opinion. Fascism will be encouraged and financed as an effective means of "keeping labor in its place." Even war will be used—it has been so used already—as the best way of breaking strikes.

Under a fascist regime, literature will fare no better than labor. Fascism is against the personal and the professional interests of writers. It means censorship, it means the substitution of dogmas for the ideas that are a writer's stock in trade. It means that the economics of scarcity is applied to the intellectual world as well as the business world, so that the audience for books and plays—already much too small—is further reduced by arbitrary limitation. And fascism means a sharper division between social classes and a closing of the careers that are still open to talent.

Here is an issue of immediate concern to writers.

The growth and diffusion of leisure, wealth, taste, education—until they reach the whole people—are to the advantage of writers both individually and as a profession. The interests of writers are identical with those of the innumerable people who compose their potential audience. Further than this, literature has always been deeply enriched by reflecting the social hopes and passions of its own time. This is the historical charter for the freedom and greatness of our literature.

We are not advancing these ideas as fixed theories that have to be accepted on pain of intellectual excommunication. On the contrary, we believe that they should be discussed among writers as freely and widely as possible. We believe that many other ideas concerning their technical and professional problems should be discussed at the same time. And that is one of the reasons why we are issuing invitations to a national congress of American writers.

Sid Getcliffe

Such a congress is long overdue. The need for it has already been expressed by regional congresses of midwestern and western writers. Other writers meeting regionally are agreed that such efforts must be unified on a national scale, and the League of American Writers is therefore sponsoring such a congress.

As one result of this congress, we should hope to see the establishment of a national organization of American writers. We suggest that the aims of such an organization should be:

FIRST, to provide a center for the cultural activities of American writers in general, and a link between writers now separated by age or place of residence;

SECOND, to help in raising cultural standards by the discussion of literary problems;

THIRD, to arrange lectures and conferences and issue a magazine;

FOURTH, to maintain friendly relations with the writers of other countries by contact with their own organizations and also by encouraging the translation of important works;

FIFTH, to defend the political and social institutions that make for peace and encourage a healthy culture—and specifically to defend the democratic rights to education, to freedom of thought and expression;

SIXTH, to effect an alliance for cultural defense between American writers and all progressive forces in the nation.

We therefore invite writers of professional standing who agree generally with our aims, to take part in a National Writers' Congress to be held in New York City during June 4, 5, and 6, 1937.

Signed: Newton Arvin, Van Wyck Brooks, Erskine Caldwell, Malcolm Cowley, Waldo Frank, Langston Hughes, James Weldon Johnson, John Howard Lawson, Robert Morss Lovett, Archibald MacLeish, Claude McKay, Vincent Sheean, Upton Sinclair, George Soule, Genevieve Taggard, Jean Starr Untermeyer, Carl Van Doren, Ella Winter, Paul De Kruif, Donald Ogden Stewart, Lewis Mumford, Clifford Odets, Marc Connelly.

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Not from the GPU

In which an ardent partisan of this paper takes issue with Leon Trotsky

By Robert Forsythe

Mr. Trotsky accused many friends of the Soviet Union—writers, authors, etc.—with being bribed with Soviet money, and he charged that the New Masses is "the unofficial organ of the Ogpu (Soviet Secret Police).—Dispatch by Frank L. Kluckhohn in N. Y. *Times*, April 17, 1937.

THE natural temptation in such circumstances is to write a sharp note to the Gay Pay Oo asking a series of pointed questions. Where is the gold? Is Soviet inefficiency so great that after three years the books haven't been arranged in such a manner that the first payment could come through? Would it be possible to have it in dollars this week instead of rubles?

As I say, this would be the simple way, but I have a theory that ridicule and satire solve no problems. The charge by Trotsky would be amusing if one were content to be humorous about tribulations which have gone into the making and sustaining of the NEW MASSES. Then they cease to be hilarious. Several months ago I addressed a letter to the friends of the NEW MASSES asking for contributions to keep the magazine alive. The response was heart-warming and effective. For Trotsky to charge that the magazine is receiving support from the Ogpu or from the Soviet Union in any form means only that the man has become obsessed by his hatred of Stalin and disdainful of the truth even when Stalin is not immediately concerned.

Let me go back a few years. I want to give the readers of this magazine a picture of the heartaches and sacrifices which go into the making of a radical publication in America. At the time of the launching of the weekly NEW MASSES, things were far from bright. The old monthly NEW MASSES had been appearing with the utmost difficulty, missing issues, being behind in printers' bills, and literally living from issue to issue. It had finally given up the ghost. It was decided then that the only hope was a bold attack on a new front and the weekly was started. Instead of a capital of $10,000, which was first sought, the initial fund was short of $1500. With this a staff had to be enlisted, paper bought, a printer engaged, and a business staff organized. It was done and the struggle commenced. The staff members were on a weekly salary of fifteen dollars. During the first summer, when business was bad, that figure was reduced to $7.50 a week, and many a Saturday night passed with no money at all. If Moscow gold was around, it was carefully hidden, and many excellent young men and women were unnecessarily bringing on future stomach aches by the meals they were eating. A single man might make out on fifteen dollars a week, but with the married staff members it meant that the wife was working (usually on a job outside the magazine). Nobody particularly cares about being kept by his wife, but it was either that or give up the NEW MASSES. I knew something about what these people went through in the early days, and I don't take too kindly to remarks such as Mr. Trotsky has made. Remarks, I may add, which have been invariably found in the mouths of the most reactionary Red-baiters seeking to ruin the radical movement in America.

As conditions improved, the salaries were raised, but the average weekly wage is still not much more than $17.50, and lately there have been several bad times when nobody was paid at all. An attempt was made at first to pay for contributions, but that was soon given up. As a result, the NEW MASSES has often been in the position of asking a writer to do an article and then surrendering the finished product to a rival magazine because they felt they couldn't ask the author to sacrifice the little money he might need for his rent and board. The struggle goes on from week to week. Lately I had dinner with a member of the staff of the NEW MASSES who had been married and now had a baby. The mother naturally had no help, the couple lived in an apartment which had seen its best days, and the meal was one which working families, and no one else, are glad to have. I have known this man for years. I know how he lives. I know what food the family is able to buy. If he is seeking to hide the fact that he is being kept by the Soviet Union, he is doing a bad disservice to his child.

"I hear Green offered an A.F. of L. charter to the Liberty League."

I have seen editors of the NEW MASSES up against the matter of eviction for non-payment of rent. I have seen them when they were working thirty hours at a stretch to get out a special issue. I have seen them in their homes and when they were getting the few driblets of dollars which came to the staff members on bad weeks. I don't like the insinuations of Mr. Trotsky or any others who malign these brave people. I may be overly sentimental about men who work and slave for an ideal, but that happens to be the way I am. The NEW MASSES is my first obligation, and I have worked for it as hard as I can. I don't appreciate the wise-cracks or hysterical judgments of people who seek to prove that it is kept by Moscow or is supported by rich sympathizers. The fact is that it is supported almost entirely by readers who make a distinct sacrifice in aiding it. The NEW MASSES is a great force is progressive journalism, and will grow in importance with the years. It is not for Trotsky or anybody else to cast stones at it. When Trotsky stops writing for Hearst and is content to be honorable in mentioning a body of editors who work themselves to the bone for a cause they believe in, I will be willing to consider him an honorable enemy. Until then, I can only include him among the enemies not only of Soviet Russia, but of decent journalism in the United States.

The staff is asking for a fund with which to issue an enlarged magazine when necessary and to tide the magazine over the summer months. If there are any who have any faith in my honesty and faith in the future of the world, I ask them to help the NEW MASSES. It fights against the most hardy of obstacles. It is brave and needy and most effective as a weapon. I ask you to help it with all your being and with all your heart.

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NEW MASSES

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Our Day Is Coming

MAY DAY, 1937, will dawn over battlefields of Madrid and picket lines in Ontario. Through the streets of Moscow, where socialism victorious shines forth, through the streets of Tokyo, Prague, Paris, Valencia, London, and New York, labor will march again for the needs of today and the society of tomorrow.

Long is the front line of the progressive forces fighting Reaction, stretching world-wide, everywhere battling those arch-enemies of mankind: war, fascism, hunger, and exploitation. While the reactionary forces press everywhere for *"der Tag,"* their M-Day against the socialist Soviet Union, against labor, against democracy, the forces of the working class and progressives will mass their might for peace, for freedom, for culture. M-Day against May Day.

It is upon Spain this May Day that the eyes of progressives throughout the world are so anxiously focused. Testing-ground of the fascist war machines, Spain symbolizes the whole sacred struggle of progressive humanity against aggressive barbarism, of democracy and culture against fascism and bestiality. To the defeat of the fascists in Spain, millions will again dedicate themselves this May Day.

What gives us most assurance of a Spanish victory is the powerful people's front, the alliance of the workers, peasants, middle-class intellectuals, and small business people—the front of all those oppressed by Reaction. The people's front will not only defeat fascism in Spain, but will prevent it from making Paris another Madrid. The growing people's-front movement in Mexico will likewise bar the road of those who would make of our neighbor a fascist state.

This May Day will not only see the celebration of the growing strength of the people's front in the countries in which those have been built, but will also see a rising tide of sentiment for a world people's front, a movement of the democratic, peace-loving peoples of the world, allied with the mighty land of socialism, the Soviet Union, against those who would apply the torch of war to the universe. This growing world people's-front movement will on May Day direct its main blows against the chief instigators of war today: Hitler, Mussolini, and Araki.

While labor and progressives everywhere will march against Reaction, they may well bear with them the thought that in the Soviet Union a new world is arising, a socialist world, where exploitation of man by man has been ended and where to give to the social treasury rather than to take greedily is the new social aim. Thoughtful followers of Christ may well ponder this May Day in that land which urges the world to beat the sword into the plowshare and wants nothing better than to build unhindered a socialist society. They may well think what sort of nation that is where an army exists only for defense, and where public officials covet the land of no other country. They may well reflect upon that great new Soviet constitution, which guarantees men and women the right to work, to happiness, to security, and carves into law the maxim, "He who works not, neither shall he eat."

For us who have fought for the Soviet Union, in the dark hours of foreign intervention and the glories of socialist construction, this May Day will be another milestone on the path to the new world which the Soviet Union has blazed through the jungle of history. "Hail U.S.S.R.!" millions of us will say this May Day. And because it is our hope, our inspiration, the beacon light of the oppressed of the world, we will vow again this May Day to defend the Soviet Union with every weapon at our disposal.

For workers and progressives of the United States, this May First is a special day for rejoicing, coming, as it does, on the heels of the historic five to four decision freeing that great American, Angelo Herndon. This is a victory not for Herndon, the Communists, or the Negro people alone; it is a victory for everything progressive in American life; it is a defeat for everything bourbon.

We will hail on May Day the growth of progressive sentiment as expressed in one of the sharpest struggles since Civil War days in American political life—the fight over the Supreme Court. Unmistakably there is developing around this issue the basic alignment of our times, Reaction versus progress. On May Day we will lend added impetus to the movement to curb the usurped power of the Court.

Historians of the future may say of our times that they bear the imprint of a firm pair of proletarian buttocks. So be it. If people can vote with their feet, as Lenin once said, American workers can show—and have shown in their great sit-down strikes—that he also serves who sits and waits. The tremendous advance of labor in basic industries under the banner of the Committee for Industrial Organization will make this May Day for all thoughtful Americans a day of joy. On this May Day we must pledge anew our efforts to press forward in the organization of the unorganized.

Nor should we forget this May Day that American labor is advancing only over the most bitter opposition of the employers and their agents in the trade-union movement—the Greens, Wolls, Hutchesons, and Freys of the executive council of the American Federation of Labor. Against them and despite them, we vow this May Day to go forward to a united trade-union movement based on industrial unionism.

The opponents of unity in the labor movement will meet on May Day the massed forces of the workers and their allies who carry on in the finest traditions of American history, 1776 and 1861. They will soon find that America will choose the twentieth-century Americanism, expressed in the great May Day marches, rather than the latter-day toryism of our fascist-minded millionaires and their allies.

Throughout May Day there will be one slogan above all: unity. The united front of the working-class forces and the people's front of workers, farmers, the Negro people, the intellectuals, and small business people of America against those who would drag us down the road to fascism.

Mark it well: May Day, 1937, is the beginning of a new forward march towards a united labor movement, towards an American people's front, expressing itself in a national farmer-labor party, towards the blocking of fascism, and towards a socialist America.

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READERS' FORUM

The Trotskyites and the middle class—A new student union—What goes on in England

● Here is a little item for your "out of their own mouths" anthology.

It is taken from the most recent issue received here of the *Spanish Revolution,* the English bulletin of the P.O.U.M., or Workers' Party of Marxist Unification, in which the Spanish Trotskyists operate. The P.O.U.M., as you know, is violently opposed to the policy of the people's front, for which reason the Independent Labor Party in Britain and part of the American Socialist Party have hailed and supported it. Reading said bulletin, issue of March 17, 1937, I came across an article entitled "A Revolutionary Army." Reading the article, I came across the following:

"The P.O.U.M. is in favor of compulsory military service, but only for the workers and peasants. We are not prepared to allow the bourgeoisie [the Spanish middle class] to have the honor of bearing arms in defense of the interests of the workers."

It may be a case of gilding the lily, but permit me to add that those redder-than-the-rose-r-r-revolutionaries who tell us that the people's front surrenders the working class to the middle class really mean to say what the P.O.U.M. says: surrender the middle class to the fascists, for it is more important to deprive the members of that class of the honor of fighting on the side of the workers (even when they would!) than of the honor of saving their own skins and civilization.

RUPERT JOHNS.

Commodity Dollars

● The wage increases resulting from strikes are rapidly taken advantage of by manufacturers and retailers to boost prices far beyond the increased cost of production. The latter leads to an unofficial inflation resulting in lower real wages.

Inflation will affect the middle and professional classes even more than the workers. Resentment against the inflation will undoubtedly be utilized by the Right for a fascist reaction.

Inflation and concomitant misery may be avoided by a nation-wide fight for collective bargaining on the basis of commodity dollars (based upon price indices). This will not tend to freeze labor's standard of living, for what would prevent the workers from asking for raises on the basis of commodity dollars? On the other hand, the worker could be always sure of the purchasing power of his dollar.

D. A.

A Campus Labor Union

● University and college student readers of the NEW MASSES will be interested in the only (we believe) student labor union, the Student Workers' Federation of the University of Michigan. If it can grow, it will undoubtedly have vast significance in the student movement in America. This, then, is a letter prepared to evoke national discussion and movement in the direction of a country-wide student labor organization.

Student workers (waiters, secretarial workers, clerks and most other categories) have been miserably underpaid. Bosses hold a whip hand over them, always sure that they will not bite the hand that feeds them. Bosses can feel safe if their unorganized student workers fear dropping out of school for lack of work. The student worker, like the industrial worker and the white-collar worker, must organize.

On the University of Michigan campus, collective-bargaining agreements have been signed with several restaurants. We have won increases in the hourly wage scale, seniority rights, payment for overtime work, the right to be paid with meals as shown on menus instead of kitchen left-overs. One owner, when he signed an agreement, sighed with relief because he would not have to fear boycott or picketing by a large liberal student body.

This coöperation of the student body with the workers is perhaps the most important factor in student labor organization. Most small college towns depend on the local college for their wealth and can be made to fear for that wealth by efficient student-worker organization, coupled with campus boycott and college newspaper coöperation.

A bowling-alley pin-boys' strike was called recently, resulting in a wage increase. When the manager went back on his agreement and a picket line of sympathetic students was thrown around the establishment, the newspaper gave the event the biggest headline of the year in Ann Arbor. At the moment, five organizers for the Ann Arbor Student Workers' Federation are being held on disorderly conduct charges as a result of their activity on the picket line. Police action brought more members to the Federation, which is growing and will continue to grow. Any further specific information can be obtained from the office of the Student Workers' Federation, 308 South State St., Ann Arbor, Mich.

A MEMBER.

Abdication, Coronation, Slump?

● In England, Coronation goes ahead, and although it seems rather tame, after the rousing scandal of Abdication, we are assured that we shall enjoy it very much when it comes.

Thanks to our muzzled press, we have no reliable means of confirming persistent rumors of the present king's illness, but these are undoubtedly worthy of attention. Whether or no he really has fits, and if he has them, whether or no they are epileptic, remains to be seen. The public believes almost all it hears (unless it is sponsored by Baldwin), and it hears a good deal at the present time. But we have had mad kings and bad kings and almost every kind of king in our history, and the one king who promised to be reasonably good fell out with the prime minister we ourselves elected, and with the archbishops who were presumably elected by the man next door. . . .

The church is definitely unpopular at present, although a few deans are doing their best to redress the balance. The dean of Westminster published a remark or two in favor of the Spanish government, and now the dean of Canterbury has followed with a really courageous statement, which even the British Broadcasting Co. had to publicize. Apart from this kind of by-product, the church is doing badly.

Rearmament takes all our time. Various scandals come out, indicating the worse ones that remain hidden. Lately the officials responsible for spending the money have rejected an offer by a reputable firm which suggested making arms without profit to themselves. This was exposed in a newspaper and questions were asked in the House, but no one wanted to believe in it (some shrewd people saw that it might set a dangerous precedent) and anyhow our British phlegm does carry us through this kind of unpleasantness. We are prepared to swear that everything's all right, so long as we needn't trouble our heads about what kind of government we have put into power.

Meanwhile, spring has come officially, with snow on the ground and floods in the small remnants of our wheat country. The air force program has already fallen behind schedule, but we continue to walk along the tight-rope of "non-intervention," hoping to curry sufficient favor abroad to keep the peace while we prepare for war.

And country people are saying, in villages all over England, that "They're just waiting till the Coronation is over to start the war" (country people still believe that Britain leads the world; they are notoriously backward)—and town people say much the same thing, but alter the word "war" to *"slump."*

VALENTINE ACKLAND.

Clarification from Mr. Hill

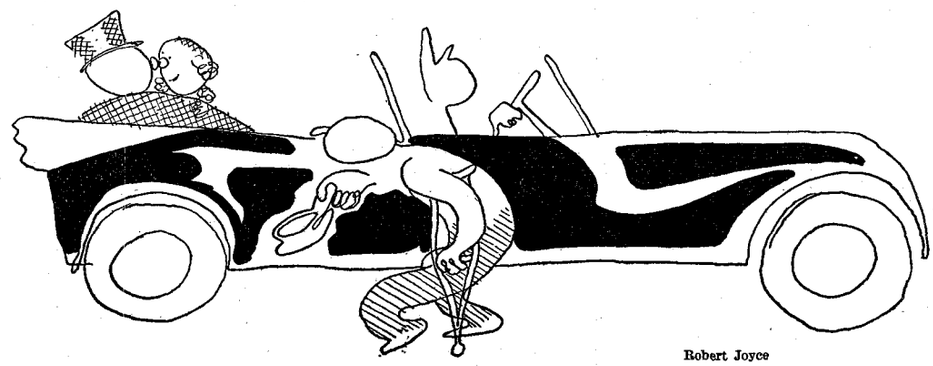
● I wish to make a correction and add a word of explanation to my first article on housing in the NEW MASSES of April 20.

The point of the article was that slum clearance and housing schemes alone will not cure the social evils that plague those forced to live in blighted areas, and that an effective drive on the causes of tuberculosis, crime, and delinquency must involve improvement of the economic status of the lower-income groups and a thorough-going correction of the social factors which also lie at the root of so-called "slum" evils.

To support this point, I wrote: "We have only to glance at the Soviet Union to see this clearly. Housing in the U.S.S.R., in spite of great recent improvements, is still far from adequate, and slum dwellings still exist in Moscow, Leningrad, and other old cities. Yet crime, juvenile delinquency, and prostitution have practically ceased to be problems in the Soviet Union."

I believe that it is incorrect to use the word "slum" in connection with housing conditions in the U.S.S.R. According to my article, a "slum" would mean not only the physical aspects of the housing and neighborhood, but also the social and economic factors which may cause families to live in slum areas. The evils which are commonly associated with the slum have largely disappeared in the Soviet Union as a result of basic economic and social changes. It is a fact that low-standard housing still persists there in some cities, but we cannot properly use the word "slum" in this connection.

SIDNEY HILL.



Robert Joyce

"If he's really a veteran, what did he do with his bonus money?"

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A MESSAGE by HOWARD CLOTHES

to the readers of this periodical . . .

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

Mr. Hallgren on American war plans—Varied fiction—On philosophy and mathematics

TWO events of national significance occurring within a week of its publication sharpen the thesis of Mr. Hallgren's study of American war policies.* The student anti-war strikes express the growing mass resistance to the belligerent mood of the militarists, while the naval "games" which have just opened the gunning season in the Pacific dramatize the strategy of the warriors. Mr. Hallgren's analysis proves beyond dispute that ever since the World War, the army and navy have been preparing for war *abroad*. And he makes out a convincing case for the theory that only united pressure against the war policies of the world's greatest imperialist power can possibly keep us out of such a war.

In a brilliant historical survey, Mr. Hallgren shows how the development of military policy coincided with the growth of America as an imperialist power. Militarism came increasingly into conflict with democratic ideals and institutions. The officer caste, as the coercive agent of capitalist exploitation both within and outside the country, while denying aggressive intent, has succeeded in pushing through its program of the "armed democracy." The traditional American reluctance to be militarized has been overcome by the general staff's principle of the "expansible standing army." The principle calls for a skeleton army which will serve as the basis for mass mobilization in wartime. It is a program whose corollaries are compulsory military training, universal conscription, and the "coördination" of business and labor. This fascist blueprint, already embodied in the Sheppard-Hill bill, is clearly not designed for a war of territorial defense.

The admirals, as Mr. Hallgren shows, are even more forthright than the generals. Their plans, based on the principle of the "offensive-defensive," call for war in the enemy's waters rather than for protection of the coast line. The refusal of the navalists to be content with a second-best rating on the high seas, the intensified fortification of the Philippines, the emphasis on "national interest"—these represent the triumph of the incendiary Mahan's famous doctrine that the nation which controls the sea power controls the world. They represent the imperialist policy of Theodore Roosevelt, who in this respect saw eye to eye with Morgan, Schwab, Whitney, and other founders of the Navy League. The admirals are preparing lavishly for a phantom enemy which they have never sought to define in terms of the realities of world politics.

The power of the navy and the army to thwart the popular will is assisted by the power which the President has to involve the country in war. The same groups that attack the President for his "dictatorial" ambitions in proposing Supreme Court reforms, safeguard the President's quasi-dictatorial power over Congress in foreign and military affairs. That venerable balancer of powers, the Court itself, has never questioned the extra-constitutional powers excercised by presidents on at least sixty occasions when they sent forces into foreign territory without congressional declarations of war. What this power of the President means, in effect, is that the army's general staff and the navy's general board, operating under the broad wing of their Commander-in-Chief, have practically unlimited scope in shaping national war policy. And their influence is bolstered by organized military pressure groups, the lobbyists in uniform, who employ the agencies of public opinion to spread deceitful peace slogans—"adequate defense is the best guarantor of peace"—as a smokescreen for bulging war budgets.

While the warriors are clear about their objectives and techniques, the peace forces are divided and confused. Mr. Hallgren exposes the fallacies of such neutrality legislation as we have had to date. The isolationists who call for automatic embargoes with no discrimination between belligerents have so far given American capitalism no real cause for fear. The proponents of the banker-munitions-maker theory of war seek to avoid war by removing its profits, but they fail to recognize that the war profiteer is not so much the cause as the effect of an economic situation.

Mr. Hallgren's book, unfortunately, is weakest at precisely the point where it might have made its most valuable contribution. It exposes brilliantly the major fallacies of various current war policies, but on the question of a positive peace program for America it furnishes only incidental observations. The two indispensable elements of a satisfactory peace program are: (1) the development of a mass political movement which stands unequivocally for peace and against fascism, and (2) coöperation with the world peace program of the Soviet Union. That Mr. Hallgren is aware of the primary importance of these two objectives cannot be denied. He writes that "The Russian military forces alone are truly defensive, for the Soviet economy does not need the markets that are indispensable to the profit economies of other powers." And he recognizes clearly that only peace in Europe can safeguard American peace. He fails, however, to conclude from this situation that collective security, backed by a people's peace movement, is the only realistic program for peace.

On the related question, that of a mass movement for peace within this country, Mr. Hallgren writes: ". . . the American League [Against War and Fascism] is the only group that sees the peace problem realistically, that understands that war is to be resisted only through the mass pressure of the people themselves." Mr. Hallgren deplores the folly of those Socialists who, as he points out, align themselves with the D.A.R. in attacking the American League. And yet, he does not come to grips with the only logical objective of such a mass movement, the People's Front. Without a discussion of these problems the volume necessarily gives the impression of defeatism and the "inevitability" of an American war of imperialist aggression. Concentration on purely military aspects slights the attainable peace objectives of a strong farmer-labor party bloc in Congress. As a critique of this war machine, however, *The Tragic Fallacy* surpasses any recent study of the subject, both in completeness of detail and in realism of analysis.

WALTER RALSTON.

Lyn David

** THE TRAGIC FALLACY: A Study of America's War Policies, by Mauritz A. Hallgren. Alfred Knopf. $4.*

Terseness from the Left

THE COCK'S FUNERAL, *by Ben Field, with an introduction by Erskine Caldwell. International Publishers.* $1.25.

THE principal reason for the peculiar suavity of so many modern short stories, of what might be called the "non-class-angle" school, has been that they depend on accepted conventions of thought and, working within these conventions, deal with established clichés of technique, mood, and plot-development. They speak, so to say, a well-known language. They can be "terse," because everything they treat of has been defined and redefined in similar terms until it is instantly intelligible to the reader. They can be "graphic" because of this terseness, and "inevitable" because of a combination of the two.

Indeed, in the lowest forms of the art, as it

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is found in *Collier's, The Saturday Evening Post,* and so on, this "inevitability" has been carried to the point where only a word or two —that She is young, blonde, and slim, and He lean-jawed, dark, and virile—is needed to indicate the heroine and hero, and no more than a couple of paragraphs to forecast the entire course of the story. One can only suppose that the reader continues on with it purely through inertia.

Let there be, for instance, a fat, dumpy girl, and we know that she is there for comedy relief; let her be dumpy and greasy-faced, and we suspect her of radical tendencies. Let there be a Father who is gruff, rock-chinned, and portly, and another swarthy fellow of foreign origin . . . but I am giving the whole plot away. It's the one about the big steel man's Daughter, who gets led into radical circles in her Pa's own plant, and is saved from Worse Than Death at the hands of the Organizer by the clean young Workman, who also dissuades his fellows from foolishly going out on strike, with all the Misery, Heart-Break, and Economic Loss such a course would entail.

All this, to the trade, is known as "planting a situation," and if I have taken a particularly crude example, it should be remembered that "planting," in the sense of preparing the reader for a dénouement to come, is an integral part of all fiction, though it occurs with increasing subtlety as the honesty and artistry of the work progresses. And if anyone questions my definition, at the start, of "non-class-angle" fiction with reference to the plot outlined above, let him remember too that in the minds of most critics and still far too many readers, the "class" angle means exclusively one that enters the scene from the left.

At any rate—and as Erskine Caldwell points out, in slightly different terms, in his excellent introduction to Ben Field's new book—the gravest problem the so-called "proletarian" writers have had to face is that of establishing new technical fictional clichés that would embody their new conventions of thought. Neither in their praising nor in their blaming has this task been sufficiently taken account of—particularly critics' cries of "propaganda!" directed at early writers in the field derived largely from the critics' own shock at encountering familiar characters in unfamiliar situations: slim blondes who not only got into radical work but stayed there; young workmen who, far from arguing against a strike, wound up by leading it.

Now, however, not only in Field's work but in that of a number of other writers, both the techniques and the conventions have been brought to harmonious expression, and the stories in this book are an outstanding example of the honesty, power, and beauty ("terseness" and "inevitability" go without saying) that proletarian writing can call its own.

There are thirteen stories in the volume. They are all of farm life, their locale is mainly western Pennsylvania, and their characters are principally hired men, small farmers, casual workers, and the like: nothing happens that has not happened. In a couple of the

Arthur Getz

stories ("Cow" and "The Report") conscious Communists appear; in most of them you see only hard-worked and poverty-ridden people jawing and muttering, trying painfully to understand the forces that grip them. "In the Grass" shows how bitter the oppression of casual workers can be, and "The Pitchfork Rises" describes a clash between sheriffs and farmers over an eviction; "The New Housekeeper," in some respects one of the best, is a kind of ugly idyll of spent farm-hands and a hired housekeeper.

Through them all, and without varying an iota from strict reality, runs a kind of hard poetry that has rarely been equalled and never, recently, excelled. Indeed, Field's poetry *depends* on reality: his figures—of a gun-shot sound "like a foot smashing into a bushel basket," of milk "stitching" into the pail—are all drawn from the common experience of his characters; and it is only by the intense conviction his work carries throughout, that he can make so simple a phrase as "a sky like emery" create a whole mood, or a "spotted" attic stair seem to evoke a household.

All this implies a certain paring-down of imagery and narration, and this, the main strength of Field's tales generally, when pushed too far can at times become a defect; in the slighter stories, such as "Sheep Dip," for instance, the rush and bareness of the style leave you at the end with a feeling of having been whirled at too mad a pace through too small a matter. But these are exceptions, and of little importance in view of the vigor and bite of the book as a whole. It is a book that, unquestionably, puts Ben Field in the front rank of short-story writers today.

ROBERT M. COATES.

Aristotle, Aquinas, & Adler, Inc.

ART AND PRUDENCE: A STUDY IN PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY, *by Mortimer J. Adler. Longmans, Green & Co.* $5.

THIS book traces the historical background of the movies, reviews the "scientific" research on their moral influence, and seeks to develop a cinematic æsthetics. Packed with quotations from Aristotle, the Church Fathers, Aquinas, and Maritain, and reeking with sanctimonious proclamations about psychology and morals, this ponderous work shuffles toward the conclusion that the movies do not demonstrably corrupt the soul, after all, so that, if the thing were at all possible, Pope Pius XI, who in a recent encyclical inveighed against the movies, should, if only for infallibility's sake, change his mind. That the book is as good as Aristotle's *Poetics,* the publisher doubts, and the author himself makes no such claim, but they appear to agree that both works represent "equally sincere and thoughtful attempts to isolate the essential eternal laws governing a specific art."

This modesty should not deceive us. Professor Adler has great advantages over ordinary critics. In the first place, he has read Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas, in whom all human wisdom is comprised, and secondly, he does not need to rely on mere "opinion" or the methods of natural science, being providentially endowed with what he calls "reason," which to doubt amounts to "a denial of man's rationality which is everywhere the same because human nature is everywhere the same" (p. 298). Since man is a rational animal, man *qua* man will always agree basically with Aristotle, Aquinas, and Adler, whether his habitat is Paris or Borneo. If he doesn't, he isn't a man. Evolution never touches the essential man—unless, of course, one changes the definition of "man." But here Professor Adler would have his devastating reply. The definition of man is eternal and unalterable. To question this is to fall into grievous error and self-contradiction—not to speak of the shambles of Vienna in which a thousand workers learned at the cost of their lives the futility of opposing the right reason of the clerico-fascists.

Though Professor Adler may deplore liberalism, democracy, and democratic art, he is willing to tolerate them as necessary consequences of the Industrial Revolution. "One cannot live in a democracy and deny popular education," he says, "though one may regret it—which is like regretting the time and place of one's birth. . . . One cannot live in a democracy and despise the popular arts. Here, too, one may wish the impossible and dream of living at a time the arts were not lowered to the people" (p. 114). After all, the professor says, the movies are on a level with the Shakespearean theater, which humored the taste of the vulgar, and the contemporary scholastic, Maritain, has allowed a place for Shakespeare in his hierarchy of the arts. This hierarchy descends "from the beauty of Scripture and Liturgy to the beauty of the mystic writers, and then to art, in the proper sense of the term: the spiritual fullness of mediæval art, the national harmony of Greek and classic art, the pathetic harmony of Shakespearean art" (p. 85). The movies, of course, should be improved morally. But here the Prudent Man comes into conflict with the Artist, and Professor Adler drags the reluctant reader through hundreds of pages of analysis of this problem which, because of the imperfection of human nature, he luminously explains, is bound to be a perennial one. Contemporary discussion of the censorship of pornography in plays has fallen into a bog of confusion because certain eternal principles have been forgotten. If, on the other hand, we keep in mind Maritain's eternal principle that avarice and lechery must not be mentioned if they

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"soil the mind and heart," everything, we are told, becomes much clearer.

The most successful part of the book is the long exposé of the scientific studies on the moral effect of the movies. But the failure of these studies does not justify Professor Adler's retreat to eternal principles which turn out to be only commonplace, or pompous mistakes. One may also regret that Professor Adler did not give us a discussion of the dictatorship and apologetics of Hollywood, its social and economic propaganda, and that he avoided all the more important problems and perspectives. The result is not a happy one. The book is not only a model of clerico-priggishness and snobbery, but interminably long and tedious. It deserves consideration not for its intrinsic merit, but because this type of thing has recently gained many admirers in the University of Chicago, where Dr. Adler is professor of the philosophy of law. Indeed, President Hutchins himself writes in the same tradition in his recent books on higher education in America, which have drawn so much fire from liberal educators. He has also invited numbers of ardent Aristotelians and Thomists to important posts at the University and it begins to look as if the greatest midwestern university is to be made into a Thomist academy. Rumors are heard of mass conversions of students and faculty to the true faith, and more and more this anti-liberal movement assumes political significance. Fortunately, the faculty at the University of Chicago is none too pleased with the ideas and policies of the president. Most of the distinguished members of the philosophical faculty resigned when Professor Adler was appointed some years ago, and much resistance has developed around other issues. The scientific faculties are bound to be opposed to the president to the degree that he carries out his ideas, for they cannot tamely submit to a subordination of science to Thomist metaphysics. Meanwhile, with all the good will in the world, I cannot see how Professor Adler can hope to advance any cause with his pretentious book.

PHILIP CARTER.

Language of Size

MATHEMATICS FOR THE MILLION, *by Lancelot Hogben. Illustrations by J. F. Horrabin. W. W. Norton.* $3.75.

THIS original and readable book will go far toward dispelling the popular prejudice against mathematics as a dull and unsocial subject—a prejudice fostered by clumsy teaching and bad textbooks. Mr. Hogben takes up different aspects of elementary mathematics, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and trigonometry, together with spherical trigonometry, analytical geometry, calculus, and statistics; places them all in a rich social and historical setting, and carefully and patiently explains the principal rules of the game. Mathematics, we learn, is a language of size, with a grammar remarkably analogous to ordinary grammar. At the same time, it is a description of the real world, not an invention due to introspective speculation. It is an important form of social activity, good not only for interpreting the world, but also for changing it. These contentions are proved by a vast amount of historical material, which, woven integrally into the text, leads us through the prehistoric period, and the Greek, Hindu, Arabic, Renaissance, and modern civilizations.

This is the first time that the materialist interpretation of history and science has been used on such a scale for an explanation of mathematics. The facts, scattered about in source books, were known, but Hogben is the first to use them and to show the potentialities lying in this kind of interpretation of an abstract subject. He draws conclusions for the present, casting sidelights on the cultural role of the U.S.S.R., on eugenics, race theories, econometrics, and other modern facts and fads; applying mathematics to problems of physics and astronomy, and illustrating the argument with a multitude of simple and graphic figures.

A self-respecting reviewer must show a critical attitude towards the best of books, and in a work of this size a number of things are bound to invite criticism. The author enjoys putting his likes and dislikes before the reader, and he produces many a good, witty, and irritating idea. A serious mistake occurs, however, in the chapter on calculus, where we get the impression that the calculus is only approximately true, and obtained by neglecting very small quantities (pp. 522, 527, 528). The notion of limit introduced in earlier chapters could here have been used with profit. Another weak point is a tendency to confuse materialism with utilitarianism, which rejects mathematical speculation when it does not serve in some immediate fashion the needs of society. This confusion is especially evident in the parts dealing with the classical Greek mathematicians, such as Eudoxus, Plato, and Euclid, whose contributions to the notion of rigor in mathematics, especially influential in recent times, do not get sufficient appreciation. Again, Hogben is too much inclined to see number magic as silly nonsense, instead of as what it originally was: a primitive way of applying mathematics to the real world. By this method, for instance, the Pythagoreans established a theory of harmonics in music. And we must not forget that mathematics could only develop as an applicable science if it was subjected from time to time to the speculations of the "pure" scientist.

All of this is rooted in the author's underestimation of the value of philosophical speculation in general, an underestimation which reaches its height in the many witticisms about Hegel, nicely placed at strategic points in order to exasperate the author's Marxist friends. This is ungrateful, to say the least, since the historical method, which Hogben so brilliantly applies, is little more than a materialistic modernization of the speculative method of the old German philosopher.

D. J. STRUIK.

Caroline Durieux

Elegance

The Taste of Nothing

NIGHTWOOD, *by Djuna Barnes. Preface by T. S. Eliot. Harcourt, Brace.* $2.50.

THAT "to think is to be sick" or, for that matter, that to be alive is to be dead, is the intrinsic meaning of this novel, which reads like the transcript of a nightmare. Once we plunge into its chaos and lunatic humors anything becomes possible—except, of course, the objectively real. Of no avail brilliant phrasing and metaphysical wit, people are ghosts, its theme a mere string for the aphorisms of literary despair, and its world no longer the solid globe we know, but the shifting sands of decadence at its most absolute.

Miss Barnes belongs to the more esoteric wing of the æsthetic modernists who at one time were in virtual control of all "new" and experimental writing, but who have since lost all hold on literature. Unlike many of her colleagues, however, Miss Barnes chooses to remain within her trance, and there is something pitiful and quixotic in her attempt to resurrect certain moods of the 1920's, moods that are truly gone with the wind.

Taking Joyce's conception of the "night-mind" as her terrain, she has found no better way of realizing it than by peopling her book with members of the third sex, all of whom agonize and move within a fog of *Weltschmerz*. There are several women who should have been men, dominated by one, Robin Vote, an object of universal Lesbian desire, who is presented as half-angel, half-animal. But actually she is a pure abstraction, a manikin wheeled around the room to enchant the sippers of nothing. Then we have Dr. Matthew O'Connor, a mighty mouthpiece who talks away pages on end—all T. S. Eliot poetry translated into prose. He is animated by a longing for children and knitting, but he too partakes of the general ambiguity, for he is both a natural being and a supernatural, symbolic monster who remembers everything and has suffered all. And since there is no motivation, no development, no volition, and no hu-

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manity, all of the characters—if characters they can be called—are frozen within their qualities, never wavering from their preconceived destinies, manipulated by their author like so many wax dummies.

Only an insufferable moralist would indict a book on the basis that its subject matter is unseemly. Proust has shown how the homoerotic, if approached realistically and with an eye to its social relations and exchanges, can be as valid a means of insight as any other theme. He shows it operating within the real world. But the trouble with Miss Barnes is that she has not really written about perversion; she has merely exploited perversion to create an atmosphere of general mystification and psychic disorder that will permit her to transcend reality and make plausible a certain modernist attitude whose essence is a tragic pose and a learned metaphysical sneer. And in his mannered preface to the novel, Mr. Eliot, ever on the alert for new proofs of original sin, only confuses the issue when he suggests that the book has "a quality of horror and doom very nearly related to that of Elizabethan tragedy." Nothing, it seems to me, could be further from the truth. One must, indeed, be adept at fantasies to mistake a trickle of literarious despair for a heaving sea of Elizabethan poetry. It is not the doom of a world reeling to its destruction that Miss Barnes expresses, but those minute shudders of decadence developed in certain small ingrown cliques of intellectuals and their patrons, cliques in which the reciprocal workings of social decay and sexual perversion have destroyed all response to genuine values and actual things.

PHILIP RAHV.

Two New Novels

WINDLESS SKY, *by Fritz Faulkner. Covici, Friede.* $2.50.

MORTGAGE YOUR HEART, *by Sophus Keith Winther. The Macmillan Co.* $2.50.

THE first novel of a young American, Fritz Faulkner, was originally published in England under the auspices of Virginia Woolf, and comes to us now stamped with the approval of C. Day Lewis and Peter Burra. It is a study in decadence, as stagnant and oppressive in effect as the *Dark Journey* of Julian Green.

Through Freudian eyes, Mr. Faulkner looks back at that period in American life, about sixty years ago, when the industrial revolution had finally swept away the old class relationships upon which "100-percent Americanism" had been based. Lewis Hedman, "farmer, trader, manufacturer, banker, magistrate," seeks to live in two worlds, the world of the semi-feudal country squire, and the world of the new industrial entrepreneur. The ideology of the one fails to fit the facts of the other. Hedman "tries to live right," builds a church, gives to the poor. But there is a widening breach in his little backwoods community which he cannot understand. The workers are "led to drink or to their slaughter" like dumb animals, and "even those voices which

John Heliker

occasionally lifted above the drone of the millwheels were without inspiration as their owners were without natural sensibility." Against this background, the ruling family of Hedman suffers the dry rot of isolation.

The novel has little "story-value." The "first-born" summons the family to prayer, the mother shuts herself in her room, the second daughter Emma sits in her window despairing that her brother William has broken his promise to take her to her lover. The lover, the "woods-colt," turns to another woman when his mistress fails to arrive. That is all. The author is not interested in narrative, but in facts of mind. He suspends his characters in still life while he performs a Freudian vivisection upon them. You get to know the Hedmans through the device of reverie in which facts emerge soaked in sensation. The lives of these people flash chaotically and simultaneously into consciousness as they clutch at the tiny straw of action which seems, but only seems, to join them. All of them restlessly seek escape—Hedman and his wife through memory, Emma through sex, Karl, the first-born, through a perverted religious fanaticism, William through companionship with the gypsy-like "woods-colt." They turn to the worship of nature in its several forms, to the idealization of "the noble savage," search all the romantic loopholes, and achieve nothing more than neurosis, perversion, and a terrible isolation from each other.

Mr. Faulkner is quite conscious of the decadence which he describes. He has no illusions as to the validity of the romantic escape. But he strikes his strange neurotic keyboard with too much pleasure in the playing to be detached in his treatment. Intellectually, he seems to grasp the predicament of his characters. Instinctively, he participates in it, finding his most sensitive stylistic moments in the contemplation of decay. Although he underlines his novel (rather sketchily, it is true) with the social and ideological maladjustments of his characters and their moment in history, one cannot help feeling that he has searched out this time and this place precisely for the opportunity afforded him to deal in "the beauty of disease." The world he creates is a closed world, a dark design on the Grecian urn, never to be changed. Mr. Faulkner has written a compelling first novel. However, he would have been a healthier artist if he had seen a cloud, perhaps no larger than a man's hand, but a cloud—lifting across the horizon of his windless sky.

Mr. Winther's new novel, *Mortgage Your Heart,* affords a contrast, in tone and direction, to the work discussed above. Sharply realistic and objective in its method, this picture of life among the Danish immigrant farmers of Nebraska, and their bitter, courageous struggle against the landlords and bankers, is at once healthy, progressive, and genuinely human. Mr. Winther understands the farmer and his life; he knows the farmer both as a human being and an economic unit; he sees human relationships in the light of social and economic change.

In the process of being Americanized, a family of rent-farmers is inevitably carried in the direction of radicalism. We leave them as the line of battle is becoming obvious, confident in their courage and sense of direction. If the novel lacks real distinction, it is because, although vivid and dramatic in the item, it never draws itself up to its full height in a cumulative moment which would give strength and significance to the author's conception as a whole. At times Mr. Winther tries to make his points with sociological asides, where dramatic realization would be more desirable. We can only hope that he will write another novel about these same people in a contemporary setting.

ROSS MACKENZIE.

Such as Proust?

SPANISH PRELUDE, *by Jenny Ballou. Houghton Mifflin Co.* $2.50.

THIS book deals with Spain before the July revolt, but one inevitably reads it with later events in mind. And it is simply an impression of Spain: intuition, wayward, and personal, shapes the whole thing. Point by point, the scene is built; point by haphazard point, making the comparison with two infinitely painstaking artists on the cover (". . . . the book, a Houghton Mifflin Fellowship Prize Winner, is such a narrative as Proust might have written from Paris in 1789 or Virginia Woolf from St. Petersburg in 1916") false.

But certain characters: Saturnina, the servant, with her orgies of dejection, her taste in music, her Madrid accent, her revenge on her lover; Teresa, Doctor Monteagudo; certain students and public figures are alive, take on vividness in the dry, sharp writing which at times rises to acrid lyric climaxes. Certain scenes, effects of light on landscape, rise like etching in the mind. And it is these, much more than any wide understanding of the country or the nation, that make the book. The slight episodes are given their value—pinned-down, fastened moths; and the series of these, without any definite momentum, is laid before the reader; so that the point always comes after the book is over; the scenes, dances,

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cafés, discussions, kitchen conversation, train journeys, flash by with increased weirdness because they are leading up to some event outside, never predictable quite, but contained in these characters and scenes. When the mention of aftermath is made, it seems patchy, stuck on long after the writing of the rest of the book.

The straight bits are better, notably in the opening chapter, where phrases are incantations. And the acute anecdotes, for *Spanish Prelude* is built up on stories like this: "We pushed our way through and saw a group of young students who were walking in a circle, bent over, striking matches, as though looking for something. A policeman shouted: 'Keep moving! Keep moving!' He approaches the students. 'What are you fellows looking for?' The students did not answer, but struck more matches and the policeman bent down too, helping them look. Two Civil Guards, in tri-cornered hats, pushed their way through the crowds. One of them took a hold of one of the students roughly by the shoulder. 'What are you looking for, fellow, trouble?' he asked, forcing the boy to stand up.

"The other students came up, and lighting more matches, shouted in chorus, 'We are looking for our constitutional rights!' "

It would be a mistake to read too much into *Spanish Prelude*. It is a record of a personality. But its position in time, its clear drawing of moments so prophetic, so much on the verge, add for the moment to its obvious qualities, its grace, the sharp exciting pictures of Spain, "victim of the modern mood."

MURIEL RUKEYSER.

Brief Reviews

DIALECTICS, *The Critics Group.* 10c.

This new publication is intended as a medium for discussion of literary problems and for articles too brief for inclusion in the regular series of the Critics Group. The first number contains D. S. Mirsky's "Walt Whitman: Poet of American Democracy"; an essay "What Is the Marxist Approach to Literature?" by the French critic, Jean Freville; and the details of a $100 prize essay contest sponsored by the Group.

INVASION, *by Maence van der Meer. Viking Press.* $3.

In no book about the World War has the war itself appeared as such a blight on humanity as in this one. No scenes of actual fighting, no mutilated corpses are strewn through its pages. Yet the horror is reflected vividly in the lives of the men and women of France living under German rule behind the line of occupation.

Splendidly organized, well-written, the book mounts steadily in conviction until one is left with an unforgettable impression of the life of non-combatants in a war. All the pettiness of their natures, the brutalization, the profiteering, the espionage, the executions, the systematic, orderly, but iron rule of the invader—all this is presented with an able, persistent, convincing piling up of detail. In fact, so thorough is the documentation, that it is hard to believe the author himself was only seven years old during the period he describes.

You will find here a number of minor characters skillfully drawn; but there are no central figures. The novel is more a broad canvas of a whole section of the people. There are some excursions into rather high-falutin' and often vague ideas about honor, glory, and the life hereafter. But on the whole, these do not greatly matter. *Invasion* is not only one of the better novels of recent years, but certainly one of the better novels on the war.

V. C.

FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH, *The Life of Marie Bashkirtseff, by Dormer Creston. E. P. Dutton.* $3.

It is no happy accident of the author's highly inspirational style, but on the other hand, thoroughly inevitable that she should write of Marie Bashkirtseff: "She had no conventional views on death: occasionally, when trying to focus her mind on the unknown in front of her, she had a moment's trepidation, but only a moment's." For not only is the type of character, as well as the very timbre of life, put into these words, true of the Russian heroine of the international legend but true also of generations that followed her. It would be stricter to say that a certain suppressed tension in the world at the moment Marie Bashkirtseff hit Paris forced one to attempt to annihilate a conventional idea of death rather than seduce it into one's individual consciousness. This prophetic bohemian (*prophetic* because of her extremity) sank with divine consciousness to lascivious acts of curiosity such as peeking through keyholes while congruously she sought to liberate her abundant energy in the more explicit divinity of art. Marie's famous diary no doubt has a disarming eloquence which makes the historic facts of her life distinctly more acceptable than the unbridled, fragrant vulgarity of Miss Creston's literary style.

C. H. F.

THE BANDITTI OF THE PLAINS: *or* THE CATTLEMAN'S INVASION OF WYOMING IN 1892, *by A. S. Mercer; Foreword by James Mitchell Clarke. Illustrated by Arvilla Parker. George Fields, San Francisco.* 1935. $3.

The Johnson County War was but one of dozens of local wars by which the West was conquered for big capital. Although the Lincoln County War in New Mexico is well known, thanks to the exploits of the redoubtable Billy the Kid, few people know that it was at bottom a conflict between the First National Bank of Santa Fe and rival interests for control of the growing southwestern cattle industry. Most of this material remains unpublished—virgin soil for any historian planning a "Winning of the West" along Marxist lines, a valuable corrective for our romantic notions about the "freedom" of frontier life. We hope for the appearance of more of this sort of thing. Meanwhile, George Fields is to be congratulated on having made a start by making this rare narrative more generally available.

PHILIP STEVENSON.

★

Recently Recommended Books

Peace Is Where the Tempests Blow, by Valentine Kataev. Farrar & Rinehart. $2.50.
The Private Manufacture of Armaments, Vol. I, by Philip Noel-Baker. Oxford. $3.75.
Rainbow Fish, by Ralph Bates. Dutton. $2.
Look Through the Bars, by Ernst Toller. Farrar & Rinehart. $2.75.
Low Company, by Daniel Fuchs. Vanguard. $2.50.
Spain in Arms, 1937, by Anna Louise Strong. Holt. $1; paper 25c.
Bread and Wine, by Ignazio Silone. Harper. $2.50.
Away from It All, by Cedric Belfrage. Simon & Schuster. $3.
The Case of the Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Center: A Verbatim Report, published by the People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R. Bookniga.
Tsushima, by A. Novikoff Priboy. Knopf. $3.50.
Pie in the Sky, by Arthur Calder-Marshall. Scribner's. $2.50.
Angels in Undress, by Mark Benney. Random House. $2.50.
From Bryan to Stalin, by William Z. Foster. International. $2.50.

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SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

The Artists' Congress opens a national exhibition—A new Soviet film—Theater and dance

NOW, for the first time, a comprehensive survey of the work of the members of the American Artists' Congress has been prepared in its First National Exhibition, which opened eight regional shows in eight cities April 16. The New York regional show (including New Jersey and New England, housed in the International Building at Rockefeller Center) displays 291 items of painting and sculpture under the slogan *For peace, for democracy, for culture.*

First impressions of this large and diverse show are a high degree of technical achievement and a stylistic confusion in which no particular æsthetic dominates. This confusion applies not only to the painting, but to the sculpture, which is technically much better than in the average group show. Superficially, the confusion, made more apparent by the hanging arrangements, might be attributed to the broad program of the congress, which seeks to overcome the artists' isolation in æsthetic cliques and unite them on the real issues of their existence. But actually it mirrors the social confusion of our epoch and the tension of various forces in the United States today. Certain reviewers have expressed surprise that artists with a definite social program should not paint more themes of social content. But although the artist may hold certain intellectual convictions, it is only when these convictions become part of his emotional experience, that he can integrate them with his life and his art. The average artist's conscious participation in social movement is of very recent occurrence, and it will take time before the fruits of this new activity are apparent stylistically. Certainly it is easier to achieve intellectual freedom than to eradicate the emotional pattern of an old tradition. An example of the continuity of tradition is the fact that the landscape painting is superior to the figure painting throughout the exhibition.

But a struggle for new forms of expression is quite apparent, if one proceeds from the work of the older and better-known painters to the younger and lesser-known ones. Those who had won reputations prior to the 1929 crisis are for the most part less affected by recent change and maintain their synthesis of various modernisms with American tradition intact. Such are, for instance, Kroll, Schnakenberg, Brook, Bouché, Kuniyoshi. Again, a well-known painter like Stella may break with his old style and adopt expressionist movement. Or a Mommer will preserve his intensely reserved romanticism, while Arnold Blanch and Doris Lee weld the same tradition into a new American *genre*. Again in such fine landscapes as Tamotzu's, De Martini's, and Fiene's, one observes an internal disintegration of form denoting their sensitivity to changing social factors.

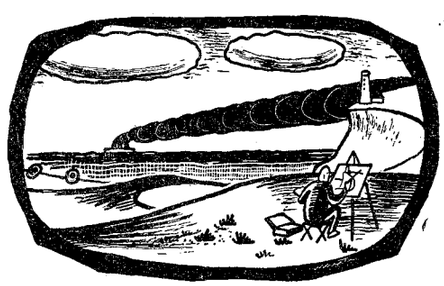
When we come to the expressionists, who are primarily the painters of individual protest, we find all kinds of painting, from decorative expressionism through destructive and anarchic patterns, to an expressionism which seeks to unite with social content. Joe Salmon creates a complex pattern of beautiful texture, while Kruckman and Kurt Roesch mate explosive color and distorted form with a social theme. And in Tschacbasov's expressionism, strong verticals reinforce a social theme.

The abstractionists are well to the fore in the present show: they include such well-known men as Criss, Bolotsky, Browne, and Stuart Davis, who contributes his brilliant *Red Cart.* In the social content painters, there is as much diversity in style as there is unity of idea. Thus one may enjoy the social theme in the naturalistic manner of the Soyers or the primitive manner of a Guglielmi. United in program, nothing could be more individual than the social revolutionary painters Gropper, Gellert, Glintenkamp, Lozowick, and Burck. Last to come on the scene are the surrealist painters, represented in the show by James Guy and Refregier, among others.

If the congress exhibitions suggest a momentary equilibrium of forces united against fascism, the recent show at the American Artists' School, which dealt with *The Social Scene,* revealed a tendency of the younger painters to forego naturalistic forms for expressionist and surrealist ones uniting them with social themes. This tendency away from the naturalistic embodiment of such themes as once predominated in the old John Reed Club suggests that in America, the disintegration of capitalist structure proceeds despite the newly heralded prosperity. Many congress members were represented in the American Artists' School show, but its chief interest centered in the younger painters, particularly the graduate students of the school, among whom are such promising artists as Ruth Gikow, Ida Abelman, Lyn David, Dan Rico, and others.

An exhibition by the Harlem Artists' Guild at the American Artists' School in New York (through May 14) presents twenty-two of its members showing seventy-six paintings, water colors, gouashes, and drawings. Included is a marble torso and head of a prizefighter by Henry W. Bannarn, who also exhibits several winter landscapes. Others include Charles Olston, with a striking portrait of a *Girl in Red Dress;* Virtis Hayes, whose six pictures reveal a reserved and sensitive treatment; Ranold Joseph, with a modern *Madonna,* best in color and composition, Aaron Douglas, with a self-portrait, and Jacob Lawrence, a scholarship student of the school, whose flat surfaces in water colors suggest Japanese prints.

CHARMION VON WIEGAND.



Martin

THE SCREEN

THE complexity and profundity of the October Revolution have been presented to us in many brilliant films, beginning with *Ten Days That Shook the World. The Last Night* (Amkino), which is at the Cameo Theater in New York, gives us still another angle: Moscow on the eve of the October revolt. It is the first of a series of new Soviet films being made to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the October Revolution. If the rest of the series turns out to be as good as this one, this will indeed be a brilliant season for the Soviet industry.

The scenario for *The Last Night* is by E. Gabrilovitch and the film's director, Yuri Reisman, one of the pioneers of the era of "socialist realism" in Soviet motion pictures. (Soviet film fans will recall his *Soil Is Thirsty.*) The scenarists have not been content to tell their story through the medium of mass movements. Not that the film neglects them, for there is plenty of mass action. But it prefers to trace the story through the lives of two families, representing the two classes at war in Moscow on the night of November 6, 1917. There is the family of worker-revolutionists, headed by father Zakharin (beautifully played by I. R. Peltser), and the Leontievs. The Leontiev patriarch is a wealthy manufacturer whose son is an officer in the White army and whose daughter is a student. The two families are brought together in various ways throughout the film. Through them the director delineates the motives and significance of the entire Revolution. But though these two families are essentially symbols, they never are allowed to protrude from the film itself. They are always part of the entire struggle; they are integrated with the people of Moscow; they are not stars in our sense of the word, but members of the cast. It is impossible, therefore, to point to any one of the members of the cast and say so and so is the hero and the other is the villain. The members of the two families may be the protagonists, but the hero of the film is a collective one: the workers, peasants, and soldiers who marched to the Kremlin to "give the land back to the peasant." The villains are the capitalists, the

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misled cadets, the unhappy liberals. Needless to say, the villain is not a mere caricature.

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Now to some of the other new films:

A Star Is Born (United Artists) is a film that has been hailed by many of the press and trade as the "most accurate mirror held before the glittering, tinseled, trivial, generous, cruel, and ecstatic world that is Hollywood." In other words, this is supposed to be a real film about the film factory. It is about as real and honest and as artistic (if you must) as are the fan magazines, the publicity, and most of the films from Hollywood. And the technicolor doesn't help any. Neither does the acting. Occasionally, there is a funny directorial trick or a "clever" line. If you are a fan-magazine addict, or if you think Janet Gaynor is gorgeous, you'll go for this.

A Family Affair (M-G-M): About a small-town middle-class family in the manner of *Ah Wilderness!*, only much better than the film version of the O'Neill play. While most of this is old stuff, the interpretations of the roles has a great deal of warmth and humanity. Mickey Rooney as the adolescent son gives a swell performance.

Love From a Stranger (United Artists): This takes first prize for being one of the most revolting films that have come from either Hollywood or London (this was made in London). It is the story of a man who marries so that he can kill his wives after six months. The film goes into the gruesome psychopathic and sexual details of the attempted murder.

PETER ELLIS.

THE DANCE

SYLVIA MANNING and Gene Martel (with their concert group), dancers of much merit and greater promise, made their official Broadway debut presenting "Crucible," a prologue from their ballet *American Comment*, and two longer suites in a completely creditable performance.

"Crucible," built in stylized traditional folk rhythms and patterns, is a running comment on the diverging and converging of group ("sectional," according to the program note) figures. More ambitious were the two frankly "conversion" compositions, *Heroic Pilgrimage* (choreography by Sylvia Manning, music by Herbert Haufrecht, who also did the music for "Crucible") and *Horizons* (choreography by Gene Martel, music by Norman Lloyd). The *Pilgrimage* is from the ivory tower to the people; *Horizons* is concerned with "Exhortation" and the "Emergence" from the corruption of the genteel traditions to the more vital trends of what was obviously intended, the proletariat.

The "conversion" theme has its history in the modern dance movement. Principally it has taken the shape of mankind, or at least a section of mankind, moving as a whole in

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the role of central character out of vicious decadence into some sort of usually utopian world structure. Vague and not over-specific in detail nor always dialectically developed, generally this idea basis has been, nevertheless, a step forward—from a preoccupation with mystic figures and Freudian psychoanalytics, from schools of architectonic art-for-art's-sake, to an intelligible approach to scenes and themes of contemporary significance.

To a great extent, the two suites of the young dancers follow in this tradition of vague figures and abstract moral structure. However, in *Heroic Pilgrimage* the action centers about specific characters and specific character development—something still rather novel in modern dance composition. The result is a more human analysis of the growth of individuals from a precious preoccupation with pyrotechnics to a profounder understanding of social relationships—and the composition is especially rich in both lyric and satiric tones.

Where the work falters is in its conception of a "conversion" that evolves intellectually from some sort of mystic closeted thinking rather than from actual material experience. Undoubtedly, "conversion" may be purely a mental process, but in the *Heroic Pilgrimage* such was evidently not the intention. There is material enough in the ballet (for example, in the group movement of "The Condemned") for such contact. But the contact and the soundness of structure that should develop from such contact are not very well realized. As a result, there are gaps in the building of the composition, and the climactic movement is of necessity rather arbitrary; while it is of itself exciting in texture, it does not attain the conviction that comes with inevitability of development.

Horizons suffers from a similar arbitrary quality. After a series of comely movements in "Decadence," "Promenade and Disintegration," "Hypnosis," "Opiate," etc. (traditional), there comes naturally enough the vigorous "Exhortation," and the conflict between the old order and the new. Unfortunately, however, the dancers slid over the possibilities inherent in the theme, and the section developed into the customary moral,

Arthur Grets

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single combat of the Arthurian and Round Table tradition. The "Emergence" that followed, despite the conviction of spirit that the group gave it, suffered from the oversimplification.

Perhaps this is not the place to expound on "Art and the Party," but it was quite evident that a maturer political understanding and development would have gone a long way towards both tightening and heightening compositions which, whatever their faults, are to be counted among the more important works of the season.

It should be said in closing that both Sylvia Manning and Gene Martel, both of whom have danced excellently in the Humphrey-Weidman groups before, have never performed to better advantage. Both indicated distinct technical development and a more sensitive control of body movement. Their group, while not yet up to the par of the better concert groups, is promising and should do better with more experience in the theater. All in all, here is a welcome addition to a vital group of young dancers who find themselves in the social conflict and have the courage to get off the fence. OWEN BURKE.

THE THEATER

IT is appalling, at the nub end of the theater season, to look back on the enormous volume of money, energy, and talent expended on things which, in their total effect, achieve a triviality that is nothing short of gargantuan. Indeed, when one looks back over the season and considers the money spent producing the baker's dozen of nine-day white elephants that lumbered embarrassingly and then died, it is enough to make the publishing of the NEW MASSES on its slender budget seem a colossal feat of cultural engineering.

During the past week, for example, Linda Watkins stands out as an example of conspicuous waste. Here is an actress of exceptional keenness of insight who has a wealth of other talents, natural and acquired, wasting her own and everyone else's time, plus quite a little money, ornamenting a play called *Penny Wise* that is about nothing more than the oh-so-arch imaginery pickle in which a clumsily philandering husband finds himself. Kenneth McKenna is in the cast, too, and is really bad —a fact which I find difficult to account for except on the ground that he is fed up to the

Soriano

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eyebrows with his lines before the curtain goes up. And there is other acting talent going to waste here. The best that can be said for this piece of fluff by Jean Ferguson Black is that there are a couple of situations in which the combination of good playing and good direction give you a laugh or two. That and the fact that it gives Miss Watkins a chance to function as one of New York's lovelier clothing models.

Curtain Call wasted Ara Gerald's very considerable talents as a tragedienne, as well as the story of the love life of Eleanora Duse and D'Annunzio. The story of their relationship is simply grueling as this play tells it, and it may well have been just that. But unless there was something inevitable about it because of gigantic forces in their lives which held them powerless in their grasp, it has too painfully the look of a couple of weaklings wallowing in their inadequacy.

ALEXANDER TAYLOR.

★

Forthcoming Broadcasts

(Times given are Eastern Daylight, but all programs listed are on coast-to-coast hookups)

Henry A. Wallace. Secretary of Agriculture and others to speak on National Farm and Home Hour, Tues., May 4, 1:30 p.m., N.B.C. blue.

Music. Roth String Quartet to play under auspices of Society for Publication of American Music, Tues., May 4, 2:30 p.m., N.B.C. blue.

Children's Health. Carrol E. Palmer, medical officer in charge of U. S. Public Health Service, will discuss "Growth of Children During Wars and Depressions," Wed., May 5, 4:00 p. m., N.B.C. blue.

People's Lobby. Lief Dall, organizer of New Jersey Agricultural Workers' Union, will speak on agricultural security; Gardner Jackson, Washington representative of Southern Tenant Farmers, on wages, Fri., May 7, 3:30 p.m., N.B.C. blue.

Problems Before Congress. A Representative will review them Wednesdays at 3:30 p.m. and a Senator Thursdays at 5 p.m., Columbia.

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PLAYS

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Babes in Arms (Schubert, N. Y.). Pleasant and talented cast of youngsters in amusing tuneful Rodgers and Hart musical.

Excursion (Vanderbilt, N. Y.). Thunder on the left in a comic vein by Victor Wolfson.

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